



REFORM BILL.

BEFORE this comes from the press, perhaps, the Lords will have passed or rejected this Bill. In either case, it is necessary that a record of the important proceeding should be contained in this my *Register*. The Bill was brought into the House of Lords about ten days ago, and read a first time without any debate; Monday, the 3rd of October, being appointed for the second reading. Accordingly, the second reading was moved by the Prime Minister, Earl GREY, on the day appointed. I shall here begin by inserting a report of the speech made upon this occasion by this nobleman. I will make no remarks upon it here; but will commend it to the careful perusal of my readers. They should read every sentence of it with attention; not only in account of the very interesting matter which it embraces, and the extraordinary talent which it displays, but for the purpose of forming those opinions relative to this great matter upon which their conduct is to be regulated, whether in consequence of the passing or the rejecting of the Bill. With this preface I insert the speech, again requesting my readers to go through it with the greatest care.

address their Lordships in nearly the following words:—My Lords, In the course of a long political life, now extended—[The noble Earl here again paused, evidently overcome by emotion at the task that had devolved upon him for performance, and several noble Lords, perceiving his momentary incapacity to proceed, exclaimed, "Sit down!—sit down!" The noble Earl, adopting the suggestion, resumed his seat for a minute, and then again rising and advancing to the table to address their Lordships, he was received with cheers from both sides of the House.] My Lords, In a long political life, which has now extended over nearly half a century, it has often been my lot to propose to this House and to the other House of Parliament—in moments of great difficulty—in seasons of great political contest and violence—many questions of the most vital importance to the political interests of this country, as well as to the general well-doing of Europe. If at such times—under such circumstances—and with such interests at stake, I have felt that awe and trepidation which the importance of those occasions must have naturally inspired, and which were no more than becoming to me, speaking as I did, conscious of my own inferiority, in the presence of some of the greatest men this country has ever produced, and sensible of the important duty which I had to discharge—if, I say, on such occasions as those I felt awed, yet still were those sensations nothing in the comparison to the feelings with which I am affected at the present moment; for I am about to propose for your Lordships' consideration a question involving the dearest interests of the country—a question, for bringing forward which I more than any other individual am personally responsible—a question which has been designated as destructive of the Constitution, as revolutionary in its spirit and principle, and as tending to produce general confusion and misgovernment throughout the country. Your Lordships will feel the weight of these charges, against which it is necessary that I should vindicate myself. My own belief is, that the measure which I am about to lay before your Lordships is one of peace, prosperity and concord. (Cheers.) I observe that on this question depends, on the one hand, the peace, prosperity, and concord of the country; and, on the other, the continuance of a state of political disaffection, which threatens all those consequences that must arise when ill-feeling is engendered in the people towards the Government of a country. (Hear, hear.) I have already stated that I, more than any other individual, am personally responsible for this measure; and it is therefore necessary, in the first place, that I should set myself right with your Lordships on this point. My opinion on this question of Par-

Earl GREY then rose for the purpose of moving the order of the day for the second reading of the *Reform Bill*; and the House, which, during the discussion as to the future hour of proceeding with the petitions, had been in some confusion, almost instantaneously subdued into the profoundest attention and silence. The noble Earl paused a minute before he commenced, and then proceeded to

liamentary Reform is well known to such of your Lordships as have done me the honour to observe the course of my political conduct. I have uniformly supported the principle of Reform. I voted, soon after my introduction into Parliament, in the year 1786, for questions of that description. I voted with Mr. Pitt for the shortening of Parliaments. I voted for a measure of reform introduced by Mr. Flood at the commencement of the Revolution, and before the beginning of that war which led to such disastrous consequences. I myself, on two different occasions, brought forward a proposition of this nature, believing, as I then did, that some change in the representation of the people was necessary to give new vigour to the Constitution, and to make the House of Commons in fact what it professed to be in theory—a full, free, and efficient representation of the people. (Cheers.) I stand, therefore, now before your Lordships the advocate of principles from which I have never swerved. But it is not enough that a public man, pretending to any claim to the character of a Statesman, should be able to prove that he has been consistent in what he has done—that what he has proposed is in conformity with opinions long established in his mind, and that it is from a conviction forced upon him through all the changes and chances of a long political career that he brings forward some measure of this description. He has a still further duty to perform. He has to prove that he has not forced into notice even a beneficial opinion, either rashly or at an inopportune season, but that he has done it under a sincere conviction that it is essential to the well-being of the country, and that it could not be longer delayed with safety, if it was his object to make it a measure that should unite in affection towards the Government and the Constitution a loyal and confiding people. (Cheers.) To show what my course of conduct on this subject has been, a short detail only will be necessary. Your Lordships cannot have forgotten what the state of the country was at the commencement of the last Session of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Your Lordships cannot have forgotten the general doubt and anxiety that prevailed throughout the community—that society was almost in a state of disorganization—that tumult had taken place in the manufacturing districts—that the influence of certain political unions, which had grown out of the discontent of the people, was spreading in every direction—that there was the most alarming insurrection prevalent in the southern counties, extending almost to the very gates of the metropolis. Neither can your Lordships have forgotten how that situation of fear and destruction was exemplified by the remarkable circumstance of the then Ministers thinking it to be their duty to counsel his Majesty not to expose them to the danger which must ensue—a danger which I most sincerely believe was groundless and unreal—from paying that visit to the city which it has been usual

for the Monarchs of this country, shortly after their accession, to pay to the great, loyal, and opulent city of this empire. These things must be fresh in the minds of your Lordships; and you must also recollect in how great a degree, at that very time, prevailed the desire for the adoption of some measure of Parliamentary Reform, which tended still more to agitate the feelings of the country, and recurred to men's minds more strongly than ever. My Lords, that was the revival of a question which had at times slumbered, but had never been extinct during a period of eighty years (hear, hear); that was a question which had always agitated the country; more especially in times of difficulty, by which the necessity of its settlement was the more clearly evinced. (Hear, hear.) That measure, then, had begun to be felt as so necessary, that when I arrived in town at that period, I found many, on whose opinions I most relied—who had never, indeed, dissented from Parliamentary Reform, but who could not previously have been reckoned among its most energetic and sanguine supporters—I found, I say, many such as these convinced that the time had at length arrived when that question must be entertained, with the desire and intention of bringing it to a close. That was my conviction also (hear, hear), and your Lordships will not forget that on the first day of that Session, I took an opportunity of discussing the general state of the country, in answer to a noble Earl whom I do not now see in his place; and who, after describing the situation of the country, had proceeded to insist on the necessity of strong measures—such as arming and others. I then stated—using the familiar illustration of putting one's house in order for the coming storm—that Parliamentary Reform was the best security that could be devised, as security was wanted; that it was the cheapest defence the Government could adopt; that it was the most certain shield that could be held out against any attempts, either foreign or domestic (cheers); that Reform in the representation of the Commons' House of Parliament, with which the people were no longer satisfied, and without which there could be no reasonable hope of reconciling them to the measures of Government, would be all the things that were wanted, and would produce more safety than any other scheme that could be developed. These were the things that I stated on the first day of that Session; and I am sure that your Lordships cannot have forgotten the answer that they received, any more than you can have forgotten the general consternation produced by that answer when the noble Duke then at the head of his Majesty's Government declared himself opposed in principle to all reform whatever (hear, hear, hear); that the present constitution of the House of Commons was a thing so perfect in itself (hear, hear), a thing so unattainable by human wisdom, that it ought to be unalterable; and that any change, even the slightest, would be

productive of danger to the country. The effect of that declaration all your Lordships must have felt. (Hear, hear.) It was described by Mr. Drummond in his address to the electors of Surrey—a gentleman not, I believe, adverse to the late Administration, and certainly not favourable to the present. Mr. Drummond had stated in that address that that declaration of the noble Duke showed great ignorance of the public feeling, and was calculated to drive the people to despair. A noble friend of mine also spoke of it in strong terms, and stated that the dissolution of the late Government, and all the agitation that had ensued, were owing to that imprudent and unfortunate declaration. (Hear, hear.) Thus far, then, I must stand acquitted with your Lordships, that in proposing the measure which I this night have to propose to your Lordships, I am doing nothing which is not consistent with the principles that I have always maintained; that I propose it in continuance of that strong conviction which I expressed at a moment when I could not have had the most remote idea of filling the situation which I now so unworthily hold; and that it has always been my uniform conviction that this measure ought no longer to be delayed. That followed is well known to your Lordships. I was called on most unexpectedly by my Sovereign to form an Administration. On that principle was I to form it? (Hear, hear.) On that of my predecessor—hoping to carry on the same system, but with greater success? My Lords, I could have no such presumption of hope or expectation. If that had been possible, there would have been no reason or motive for their removal. The question, then, simply came to this, that they were to go on maintaining the same system as heretofore, or that those who succeeded them were to act on a principle more congenial to the general feelings of the country. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances, I certainly did state to my Sovereign, as a condition for my accepting office, that I must be allowed to bring forward a measure of reform as a measure of the Government. That condition was graciously assented to by my indulgent Master; and though that measure may be dissented from in this House, at least we have the satisfaction of feeling that it has been met by the sanction of the public; and I therefore lost no time in preparing, in conjunction with my colleagues, a measure, the result of which is to form the subject of this night's deliberation. So far, then, I hope your Lordships will understand, that I am not chargeable with the introduction of an unnecessary measure—that I had reasons for thinking that the state of public feeling absolutely required the introduction of a measure, and that it could no longer be delayed with safety. Under these circumstances, I think that it cannot be charged against me as a crime, that I took the earliest opportunity of carrying into effect my design, of acquitting myself of the pledge which I had given, by bringing forward a measure,

which, if it receives the sanction of this House, will, I most conscientiously believe, prove a measure of peace, tranquillity, and conciliation to the whole country. (Cheers.) But there is still a further point to which I have to give an answer. It will, no doubt, be said, grant that there is a general feeling in favour of reform—grant that there is a general admission of the principle (an admission so general, that, with the exception of the noble Duke, I believe that there is not one of the late Administration that does not feel that the measure has been brought to such a crisis that it must be seriously looked at)—grant all this—yet why go to the extent of the present measure, which, in the opinion of those who make this observation, is revolutionary in its principle, subversive in its spirit, and calculated to prove fatal to the constitution? My Lords, I hope that I shall be able to answer that question also; and however easy it may be to declaim about revolution and subversion, I trust that I shall be able to show that there is nothing in the measure that is not founded on the acknowledged principles of the English constitution (cheers)—nothing that is not consistent with the ancient system of representation—and nothing that may not be adopted with perfect safety to all the existing privileges of the state, and more particularly to that order to which we belong, and which it has been erroneously supposed this measure is intended to attack. (Hear, hear.) The principle, then, being universally admitted, that something must be done, we naturally come to the question—in what manner ought it to be done? I imagine that there is not one of your Lordships, from the most diminutive bit-by-bit reformer up to the noble Lord opposite, who some time ago took an opportunity of saying that whatever was done on this subject must be vigorous and decisive—who will be disposed to deny that it was necessary for us to ask ourselves—in what manner is this reform to be effected? Whether it must be by doing as little as possible—such as bringing something, that really meant nothing, in the name of reform, and so affecting to redeem our pledge—or whether it must be by taking the noble Lord's plan, I was going to say, but plan he never vouchsafed. (A laugh.) Shall I then rather say, by taking the noble Lord's principle of doing something vigorous and effective? If so, I would observe, that I think we have done that indeed (hear, hear, from the Opposition); for the principle of our measure is, that it should be effectual, and such as to give confidence to the people (cheers from the Ministerial side), at the same time enabling property and intelligence to take their stand in that fair proportion which the improvement of the age appears to require. These, then, were the two ways of which we had our choice: as to taking the first—that of a bit-by-bit reform—that of keeping

—“The word of promise to the ear,
And breaking it to the hope”—

that of introducing a half measure as a step to future improvement at a more distant period—it had this fundamental objection—that it would have satisfied nobody (cheers): those who were in reality the opponents of all reform, though they talked about supporting a system which no one could understand, and which assumed no material shape, would, on finding that the ground had been taken from under their feet, have been discontented; while, on the other hand, the people, who were looking for a substantial and effective measure, would certainly not have been satisfied; and thus this ministerial measure, instead of giving satisfaction, would be exposed to the fundamental objection, that it did nothing towards appeasing that agitation and excitement which had so alarmingly prevailed. Looking, then, at the question in this point of view, it would utterly have failed; and I necessarily came to the conclusion, that the most prudent, the most safe measure that I could propose would be a bold one (hear, hear); and this the rather, because I felt, that looking to the safety of the country, which was the true policy, I could introduce such a measure as would satisfy the general desire of the people, on reasonable terms, without going from the position on which I was determined to stand—that of defending the true principles of the constitution. (Hear, hear.) It was on this principle, then, that I and my colleagues considered the plan of reform; and on looking at the various causes that had given rise to the complaints of the people on this subject, it was impossible not to find our attention attracted to the nomination boroughs, as they are called. Against these the public feeling has long been directed, and I think with good reason; for as long as these boroughs, in which the public had no interest, were sufficient to outweigh the votes of an immense portion of the inhabitants of this country, it ought to be no matter of surprise to hear the exclamation, that it would be better to have no representation at all than suffer so gross an abuse to continue. And is it unnatural that the people should have imbibed a disgust for that nominative system, when we come to consider what is the character of these boroughs? The claim set up for them is that of sending Members to the House of Commons without the least pretence to the character of being the real representatives of the people, though they are returned under the insulting title of representatives, when in fact they are the nominees of Peers, or of other wealthy individuals, who have converted that into property which was originally a trust, and who dispose of it for their own particular advantage, without any view to the general benefit of the community. These are the feelings that prevail among the people, and how it is possible to convert them into those of affection and conciliation towards the Government or the constitution, without removing those boroughs, I must confess I am not able to see. Is it, again I ask, to be wondered at that the people should feel dissatisfied, when

they recollect the scenes that take place at each election, the barefaced corruption that is exhibited on all sides, the open sale of seats, the return of Members in the open face of day under the nomination of the proprietors of boroughs, while the people look on and see that which all writers on the constitution, all eminent English lawyers, have stated to be incompatible with the rights of representation, daily made the subject of profit to nominees, in defiance both of justice and of law? On these grounds, therefore, we proceeded to consider what boroughs ought to be abolished, and in so doing we found that many were so situated as to be incapable, under any circumstances, of possessing the elective franchise, it being impossible to extend the constituency in those boroughs that only possessed the name and ancient site of places which formerly sent representatives to Parliament. Under these circumstances, we thought that they could only be considered as gangrenes, which defied all cure but that of excision; and we therefore determined to disfranchise entirely the boroughs mentioned in schedule A, taking as our criterion a certain rate of population, as found in the census of 1821—not that we supposed that there was any particular virtue in the number we selected, but because it enabled us to draw what might be deemed a fair and impartial line, and helped us to conclude what boroughs existed into which it was impossible to diffuse a new or vigorous constituency. These boroughs, therefore, we determined to propose to Parliament to abolish altogether. There then presented itself to our notice another class of boroughs, having a higher population, and which we thought might be allowed, to a certain extent, to return their franchise, by the admission of regulations, which will be found in the bill, for the purpose of raising their constituency, after depriving each borough of this class of one of its Members. I know that it will be alleged against this measure that there are anomalies in this bill; and I admit that if it was altogether a new scheme, such an accusation would be a just one; but still it certainly does appear to be a little inconsistent that such a change should be urged by those who think that the measure is already too extensive (hear, hear), more especially after I am fain to admit that this second class of boroughs has been retained for the purpose of conciliating those who are most ready to deprecate too extensive a change; but, at all events, it will be well for your Lordships to consider that these anomalies could only be remediable by a general division of the population and the counties into districts, and so establishing a more equitable partition. The framers of the bill then proceeded with the disfranchisement of the boroughs contained in Schedule A, and to limit those contained in Schedule B to the return of one Member each. The extent, then, to which the House of Commons was reduced by the disfranchisement of the boroughs in the first class, was 111; those in the second class

amounted to 41, and with two taken from the borough of Weymouth, made the total number taken from the House of Commons 154. That having been done—the work of disfranchisement having been to that extent completed—the next step to be taken was, to see what means were necessary and practicable for the purpose of supplying the deficiency in the numbers of the House of Commons which those proposed disfranchisements had created. The bill, with those disfranchising clauses, was proposed to the House of Commons, and by that House adopted, and also clauses were adopted for the purpose of bringing back the numbers of the representative portion of the legislature to pretty near the same amount, in point of numbers, that it had previously been. Sixty-five new Members were given to counties, twenty-four additional Members were given to the House as representatives for twelve large towns not before sending Members to the House, and which, under the bill now before the House, are each to have Members; and then there are twenty-eight towns with one Member each additional, which, with the Member left to Weymouth, make 118, which, taken from 154, leave a remainder of 36, being the number which the House of Commons was to lose. Having thus removed the rotten portion of the constitution, our next duty was to consider how we should best impart fresh health and vigour to the whole body of the constitution—having removed the rotten and decayed branches, our object was to ascertain how we should best infuse new vigour and freshness to the parent stem and the remaining branches, so that fair fruit should be borne, and permanent health and energy established.

*“Inutilis que false ramos amputans
Feliciores inserit.”*

Your Lordships will see that these arrangements constitute the plan upon which we now propose to take the sense of this branch of the Legislature; and I hesitate not to say that it will not only be unattended with danger, but that it will effect the best purposes of permanent security. This plan, I hope, will obtain the consent of your Lordships. Your Lordships will further see that in Counties, all the present rights of voting are reserved—that all freeholders in counties remain precisely as they were—that every man in possession of a freehold retains his right of voting; but no franchise can be communicated with a freehold for life, unless it be of the value of ten pounds. Thus, then, will that manufacture of votes be prevented, which in practice worked so mischievously. To those rights so already existent or created by the bill, we propose to add the right of voting from copyhold and customary tenures of the value of ten pounds—to lessees for sixty years and to other lessees, in the printed bill will more particularly exhibit to noble Lords. In this part of the arrangement I have now to call your Lordships' attention to a clause which was introduced into

the bill during its passage through the other House—it was not recommended by any one connected with his Majesty's Government, yet I nevertheless sincerely hope that its operation will be beneficial, though I am not without fear that a contrary result may ensue, the privilege of which I speak is that of the right of voting given to persons holding lands of a certain value without leases. It must be obvious to your Lordships, that in this case there exists a considerable danger that the power given to landed proprietors may be used in a manner such as it has been in places that I will not name; and if so used, it will probably lead to a general demand for that regulation formerly mentioned in reference to this subject, but not one word respecting which has found its way into the petitions recently presented to this or the other House of Parliament—the regulation I allude to is the right of voting by ballot. It is one which has not been taken up by petitioners from the moment the measure of reform was taken by the responsible advisers of the Crown as a Government measure, and which will probably not be resorted to again unless the power imparted by the clause I have just mentioned should be abused in the manner so recently and so justly censured. At all events, this clause in the bill cannot but recommend it to the adoption of every man in the country who sincerely desires to increase the privileges and influence of the landed Aristocracy—with them this clause can but form an argument in favour of the measure. But before it was introduced into the bill there was not even a plausible ground for saying that the landed interest was not sufficiently provided for, and protected. Will not the sixty-five additional county members increase their influence and power? In fact, there was no part of the bill which did not show a tendency rather to increase than to lessen or destroy that influence. Having thus laid before your Lordships an outline of the principles of this most important measure, I shall not trouble you with those details which will more properly form the subject of discussion in the committee. The object of those details chiefly was to guard against expenses at elections—taking it as a first principle, that the return of members to the Commons House of Parliament should be free and unshackled. The division of Counties is the next subject to which I shall call the attention of the House, and that, only very briefly, observing, as I pass, that that division ought to form one of the strongest recommendations of the Bill to that portion of the landed aristocracy who limit their views to the narrow objects of private and personal interest. I know that this portion of the bill is open to the charge of favouring those combinations and compromises by which particular persons have been enabled to return members to the other House of Parliament; but my persuasion is, that reflection and experience of its operation will convince its warmest opponents that such

will not be the ultimate results, and sure I am that it contains nothing which ought to render it unacceptable to your Lordships. Going further into the details of the measure, you will find that it contains fresh provisions for regulating the polling at elections, and for securing every freedom and facility for the electors. It provides that the same property shall not yield two votes—that, in a borough, no man shall vote for the town and the county; if he be a resident he votes for the town, if a non-resident for the county, and no intermediate tenant shall possess a right of voting, neither shall qualifications be derived from the payment of land-tax; and to all at present possessing the right of voting for towns as freeholders, it is still continued, provided they do not live at a greater distance from the place represented than seven miles. This, I need not point out to your Lordships, will prove a vast advantage in diminishing the expense heretofore attendant upon bringing non-resident voters to the poll; and further, it will have the beneficial effect of ridding the representation of the interference of strangers; and each place may in future be expected to send to Parliament persons connected and acquainted, and, as it were, identified with their local interests. In the qualification of those who vote from houses, it will be required that they show a previous possession of them twelve months preceding—that they give direct proof of the house being of the value of 10*l.*, or rated in the parish books for *Poors' Rates* as for a house of that value, or paying an annual rent of that amount. If he qualifies on rent he must have paid up all arrears; if on taxes, all arrears to a specified period; and no householder shall be entitled to vote as such if his landlord pays his *Poors' Rates*. (Here the noble Lord went into a statement of the number of boroughs disfranchised and of those enfranchised, but in terms at variance with the printed bill. His Lordship almost immediately corrected himself, but in a tone of voice not heard below the Bar.) Upon this general outline, your Lordships are now called on to decide. I call upon any man to say if it be exposed to objection. Will it be considered that the right of nomination to boroughs forms a part of the British Constitution; but, on the contrary, will not all men say that such a right is wholly at variance, and inconsistent with the spirit and independence of that Constitution? I say, my Lords, that its acknowledged principles demand the discontinuance of this modern—I should call it this incorrigible—abuse, as the only means of recovering that popular confidence without which the representatives of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament could not adequately discharge the high trusts reposed in them. I will go much farther. I will contend that, neither in theory nor in practice, is such a system consistent with the principles of the British Constitution. In theory, all men agree that the representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament should be full, fair and free; while, in

the present practice, it is any-thing but full, fair, or free: and no man can contend for its continuance, unless he be also prepared to maintain, that a system is beneficial to the country, in accordance with the principles of political expediency and unalterable justice, which gives to loan contractors and speculating attorneys the rights and the influence which ought to belong to rank and landed possessions, and local connexion and personal character. I can little imagine that, in times like the present, a system such as this can find its advocates; that those strange and unjust anomalies should be defended in the 19th century—in an age like this, when, “the schoolmaster is abroad.” (Hear, hear, hear.) I should have imagined, that merely to state the existence of nomination boroughs in this country would be quite sufficient to ensure their being denounced. Let us see how far this matter affects the aristocratic branch of the Legislature. In the writings of all the men who have ever written on the Constitution of this country—in the recorded Resolutions of the House of Commons—in the proceedings of the House of Commons—I can find no trace or vestige of any-thing to warrant such a practice as that of nomination. On the contrary, the most careful steps have at various times been taken for the purpose of avoiding any practice of that nature, or even having a tendency thereto. Were there in the theory or the practice of the Constitution any-thing of the sort, is it reasonable to suppose that it would have escaped the acuteness of Locke and of Blackstone? It has not only not been acknowledged by them, but it has been denounced by Chatham and Saville, by Pitt, by Fox, and by Grattan. It has been denounced by them as that gross abuse, that rank gangrene, which was eating into the vitals of the Constitution, destructive alike of the liberties of the people, the security of this House, and the maintenance of the Throne. (Cheers.) I refer to the records of Parliament, in evidence of the impropriety of the interference of Peers in the election of the Members of the other House. At the commencement of every Session, is it not made a standing Order that Peers shall not interfere with the election of Members of the House of Commons? And will any man in the face of that maintain that peers ought to buy and sell seats in Parliament? Will any man, upon a point like that, have the hardihood to set himself against the recorded resolutions of the House of Commons? Another principle of our Constitution is, that no man shall be taxed unless through his representatives in the House of Commons; and so jealous is that House of its privileges in respect to bills for the imposition of taxes, that it will not allow this House to correct the most trifling mistake, without instantly throwing out the bill. Will it then be contended that the practice of nomination is in any respect consistent with principles such as these? The arguments, then, which rest upon the theory of the Constitution, are ar-

guments which I hold cannot be refuted; let us then come to the practice of the Constitution. I hold it to be equally inconsistent with all that I have ever been able to discover of that practice—where is the proof of its ever having been recognised? Can any man, by any reference to the practice of our ancestors, show that such a practice was ever legally introduced? Is it not the known prerogative of the Crown to issue summonses to towns and other places to return members to Parliament? And it is equally indisputable that for the most part those writs were issued with a view to the competency, wealth, and population of those places, and their general fitness to return members of Parliament when so summoned. Is it not notorious that the issue of those writs has been discontinued, either on application to be relieved from the burden of returning members—for in those days it was a burden—or from the known decay of those places? These are facts notorious in the history of Parliament. I do not mean to say that this prerogative has at all times been wisely exercised. I do not mean to say that it might not have been abused—that writs might have been denied where they ought to have been issued, and continued where they ought to have been withdrawn; but that tells nothing against the principle for which we are contending—that principle is, that the representation of the people ought to be a real representation; the only ground on which writs could be refused, was that the boroughs had fallen into decay. These considerations, then, lead me to the other branch of the subject. It is said that the measure is one of spoliation and robbery. (A cheer from a noble lord on one of the Opposition benches.) I think I hear some noble lord assenting to this position. Let us look at the foundation upon which this rests. I deny that the right of returning members to Parliament is other than a trust; and surely no man will have the hardihood to affirm that the obligations of a trust are not perfectly distinct from the rights of property. Property may be enjoyed—may be used—may be abused, provided the abuse injures no man but the owner; but a trust is confided for certain ends and purposes; and if a trust be violated, it may be resumed with perfect justice. In the private transactions of life, that principle has ever been acted on; and I see nothing that should deprive us of its benefits in transactions of a public and political character; and I say that time, however long, can consecrate no abuse so glaring and indisputable. Nothing can convert a trust into a right of property. This, then, is no act of robbery or spoliation. I will affirm that, over and over again, the old practice of the constitution was, that the King should refuse his writ; it is a matter of the most perfect notoriety that forty-four boroughs and one city were thus, in effect, disfranchised, in consequence of the discontinuance of the writs; thus, then, the bill only proceeded according to the usual practice of the constitution, in

proceeding as it did with the boroughs contained in Schedule A. Much has been said of spoliation and robbery; but is there nothing in modern times that equally well deserves to go by that name? Look to the Union with Scotland; on that occasion sixty-five boroughs were reduced to fifteen, and one hundred boroughs in Ireland, returning two hundred Members, were, under similar circumstances, disfranchised; was that an act of robbery and spoliation? Oh, but there was, on that occasion, compensation. (Loud cries of "Hear, hear," from the Opposition benches, re-echoed from the Ministerial.) No, it was not compensation, it was gross and scandalous bribery—corrupt and notorious bribery—it was a bribe for agreeing to the Union. I was in the House of Commons at the time. I voted against the measure of the Union at the time, but now that it has been carried, that it has subsisted for so many years, I must say, that any attempt to dissolve it would be in the last degree injurious to both countries. Once again I repeat, that what was given to the Irish borough-owners was not compensation, but a bribe. (Here Lord Plunkett addressed a few words to the noble Earl.) I am reminded by my noble and learned Friend, that 28 of the Irish boroughs lost one-half of their representation without any compensation whatever. If to take the whole be a robbery, surely to take half is in principle the same; but the object is too notorious to be disputed, or to need any discussion. No; if the Irish Parliament had not completely forfeited all claim to the confidence of the people it professed to represent, that Act would never have been heard of which is now attempted to be repealed, and which I think never can be revoked without ruin to both countries. At the period when that Union took place, I was, I have said, in the House of Commons, and shortly afterwards I heard Mr. Foster, who had been Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, say in his place in the United Parliament, that money had been directly given, and Peerages bartered in lieu of votes. (Cheers and counter cheers.) I have no hesitation in saying, on the subject of peerages, that on a recent occasion—I allude to the Coronation; a time when the Royal grace and prerogative are usually exercised in reference to the peerage—that I should not have done my duty if I had advised the exercise of that prerogative in favour of those who were adverse to the present bill; but I believe there do not exist men more independent than those who have been added to the peerage. But to return to what Mr. Foster said. He made the statement which I have described. The late Lord Londonderry got up, and objected to such insinuations being thrown out. Mr. Foster replied, "I make no insinuations—corruption and bribery have been practised—money has been paid—seats have been bartered—is that an insinuation?—I am ready to prove the statement." So did that right hon. Gentleman speak, and no answer was given.

Upon no ground, then, I repeat, can nomination be called the practice of the constitution. A schedule, amounting to forty-four boroughs, and one city—to say nothing of the disfranchisement of Scotch and Irish boroughs—is to be found in our Parliamentary history; and as to the resumption of a trust, when it ceases to be used for the benefit of the parties for whose advantage it was created, I believe that is a position against which no intelligent or impartial man will for a moment contend. But in answer to all this, I am told that the constitution, in its present form, works well; but that rule of working well proceeds too far, for if a despotic Prince happened to be a man of mild and amiable disposition, his subjects should incur the hazard of submitting to his tyrannical successor, rather than depose him. Surely that is not doctrine that can ever be adopted in a British Parliament. Freedom is the first of blessings; when possessed it should be most scrupulously cherished, and where wanting it should be obtained at almost any cost. Has the constitution, in its present form worked well? Has it conciliated or preserved the confidence of the people? If it be necessary that the representative portion of our legislature should aspire to the confidence of the people, I will say of the present system, that instead of working well, nothing could have worked worse. I did not happen to be in this House a night or two ago, when a most valuable admission was made; but I read the statement in the newspapers. Of the present representation of Scotland I can say the doom is sealed—it is really so absurd and ridiculous that I only wonder how any one could for a moment imagine the possibility of its continued existence. Its thirty-three counties had but 3,255 freeholders. If we remove from these the numbers who vote merely in right of superiority, it reduces the whole number to 1,259—scarcely enough for a small borough. Argyll, with a population of 97,000, had only 130 electors; there were only 131 in Caithness, of whom but 11 were real proprietors. Renfrew, with 15,000 souls, had only 142 electors. Inverness, with 95,000, possessed no more than 90 electors, and of that number but 28 were real proprietors. Bute had but 21 electors, of whom one only was a proprietor. But, my Lords, we are not now going into the subject of the Scotch representation; and I only make these statements in answer to the argument of those who assert that the present system works well, notwithstanding its abuses. If good habits, industry, respect for property, and increased prosperity, are the *criteria* of improvement, in what country are they more remarkable than in Scotland? Surely that improvement is not to be attributed to the system of Scotch representation, which, as has been acknowledged by a noble Lord opposite, is so bad, that it can no longer be maintained. I know not, then, by what reasoning it is attempted to attribute the prosperity which this country has enjoyed to the defective representation, or to prove that the

abuses should be perpetuated, because the country has improved notwithstanding their existence. But, my Lords, I am at a loss to understand the distinction which has been drawn between those parts of the Scotch representation which noble Lords opposite condemn, and Gatton and Sarum. (Hear.) In what way is the mound of Old Sarum or the wall of Gatton Park better entitled to representation than the Scotch Superiority, which reduced the constituency of a county to one individual? I cannot see how it is possible to retain one, if you abandon the other (hear); nor can I believe but that the removal of those abuses, instead of undermining the Constitution, will render it more secure. Nor, my Lords, has it been by this House that the power of nomination to seats in the Commons House of Parliament for these boroughs was enjoyed, but by a few individuals, who exercised that power for their own advantage and to promote their private ambition, whilst the odium is thrown upon the whole body! (Hear.) That power is not exercised for the advantage of the Peers as a branch of the Legislature, nor is it exclusively possessed by Peers, but shared with them by loan contractors and attorneys, who speculate in the purchase and sale of these boroughs for their own profit. The effect was to diminish the respect of the people for the Peers, and to place entirely at the disposal of a few individuals those offices of honour and emolument which ought to be the reward alone of merit. By removing such abuses, you will relieve at the same time the Peers from odium, and do justice to the people. But, let me ask, do the Peers themselves gain nothing by the bill? I am not one of those who think that it could be for the advantage of the nation that each branch of the State, standing upon its own right, should cling to the letter of the Constitution for its own advantage against the interests of the other two. It constitutes the happiness of the State in which we live that all the three orders are so blended together, that each, when acting as a separate body, is of necessity led to view its own interests as wound up with those of all the others. (Hear.) My Lords, I would by no means deprive the Peers of that natural and useful influence which they ought to possess; at the same time that I thank God they do not possess such immunities and privileges as were possessed by the old French nobility. I greatly prefer that just influence which they possess, as landed proprietors, and as magistrates—by good offices, by benevolence and justice to the people, with whose interests theirs are identified as members of the same commonwealth. That influence they will continue to possess, and that not diminished but increased, after the passing of this bill (hear!)—for the odium excited by the nomination boroughs will then be removed; whereas, should the unfortunate decision of this night be to reject the bill, I verily believe that the just, and natural, and useful influence of the Peers of this country

will be seriously reduced—by reforming those abuses which had become odious in the eyes of the people, and which, amidst the improvements of time and the increasing knowledge of the people, cannot be retained for any considerable length of time by any existing power in this country. The bill, besides relieving the Peers from the odium cast upon them by their supposed participation in those abuses, will add considerably to their just influence, by the addition of sixty-five Members to the county representation. (Hear.) The bill has been hailed by the country with a more unanimous expression of approbation than any other measure upon record; and this remark, my Lords, has brought me to the last topic on which it is my intention to occupy you at present. I have said that the country was unanimous in approbation of the bill of which I have risen to propose the second reading. For although it has been said that the eagerness of the people had passed away, so strong was this opinion in the minds of many persons at the time of the dissolution of the last Parliament, that they confidently predicted that the result of the elections would be unfavourable to the Government which had resorted to that measure. But I need not remind your Lordships of the result of those elections, nor need I remind you of the petitions which have lately been presented to this House, bearing signatures more numerous than ever before were attached to petitions upon any subject. I may be told that those petitions must not be referred to, for that the Peers of England must calmly deliberate this great question on its own merits, and without regard to the desires of any portion of the people; and that the Peers will do their duty. Again, I may be told, that those petitions do not express the sentiments of the people of England; or, that if they do, the Peers are too noble, too high-minded, too courageous a body to yield anything to intimidation. I believe, my Lords, I should be one of the last men in this House to recommend it to your Lordships to yield to intimidation. Far from addressing your Lordships in the language of intimidation, I would say, "Do not give way to popular clamour." But I do not use menace when I say, "Do not resist the just and liberal wishes of the people unequivocally expressed." (Hear.) I do not use the language of the people when I say your Lordships to attend to the voice of the ten-ths of the people—too loud not to be heard, and too plain and reasonable to be mistaken or denied. But, my Lords, do not enter yourselves into the belief that there is any abatement of the feeling of the people on the subject of Reform. Do not believe that if this bill be rejected, a more limited measure can be substituted with safety or advantage. You must either take this bill, or it will be called on, not for this, but for something which you will think infinitely more dangerous than the present measure, though perhaps not more dangerous than a second refusal. I would not recommend it to

your Lordships to regard popular clamour, but I would earnestly pray you to consider impartially and attentively the general expression of public opinion, and, if expedient, to yield to it. (Hear.) What was it that induced the noble Duke opposite to concede to the claims of the Catholics? Did the noble Duke ever state that his opinions respecting those claims had been altered? Did he retract the sentiments and principles by which his former conduct had been governed? (Hear, hear.) Did the right hon. Member of the other House of Parliament, who was second only to the noble Duke himself in influence and importance, say that his own opinions had undergone any change? Did he not rather found the change in his policy upon the exigency of the times and the altered state of public opinion? Was not the noble Duke himself charged in this House with inconsistency, and with departing from his principles?—and was not the defence of the noble Duke that he had not changed his opinions, but that he could no longer act on them consistently with the opinions of the country? (Hear.) With respect to the present measure, I have not to excuse myself to your Lordships for any change of former opinions, or for any departure from principles formerly professed. But, had it been otherwise, I should have felt myself borne out by the example of the noble Duke, in yielding to the unequivocally declared opinions of the people, and giving them that full, free, and fair representation to which they are entitled by those principles of that Constitution which have rendered it the admiration of the world, and the envy of surrounding nations. I do not, therefore, my Lords, address you in the language of intimidation, when I entreat you to attend to the opinions of the people. But as noble Lords may dispute that those petitions express the opinions of the people, I will ask, can they dispute that those opinions were expressed in the results of the dissolution of last Parliament? When Sir Robert Peel introduced into the other House of Parliament the Bill for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, he stated that such changes had taken place in the opinions of the people, it would have been impossible for the Government to persevere in opposition to those opinions. Now, my Lords, how did the right hon. Gentleman make out his proofs that the people had so changed their opinions? He stated that the best criterion, the most practical and constitutional way to ascertain the opinions of the people, was to take a considerable number of the principal counties and towns, and to observe in what way the votes of their representatives had varied upon a particular question. On that principle the right hon. Gentleman compared the votes of the representatives of eighteen counties, which he thought the most important, and finding that of those representatives nineteen voted for, and only seventeen against the emancipation of the Catholics, when the question had been last before the House, he considered

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your Lordships to regard popular clamour, but I would earnestly pray you to consider impartially and attentively the general expression of public opinion, and, if expedient, to yield to it. (Hear.) What was it that induced the noble Duke opposite to concede to the claims of the Catholics? Did the noble Duke ever state that his opinions respecting those claims had been altered? Did he retract the sentiments and principles by which his former conduct had been governed? (Hear, hear.) Did the right hon. Member of the other House of Parliament, who was second only to the noble Duke himself in influence and importance, say that his own opinions had undergone any change? Did he not rather found the change in his policy upon the exigency of the times and the altered state of public opinion? Was not the noble Duke himself charged in this House with inconsistency, and with departing from his principles?—and was not the defence of the noble Duke that he had not changed his opinions, but that he could no longer act on them consistently with the opinions of the country? (Hear.) With respect to the present measure, I have not to excuse myself to your Lordships for any change of former opinions, or for any departure from principles formerly professed. But, had it been otherwise, I should have felt myself borne out by the example of the noble Duke, in yielding to the unequivocally declared opinions of the people, and giving them that full, free, and fair representation to which they are entitled by those principles of that Constitution which have rendered it the admiration of the world, and the envy of surrounding nations. I do not, therefore, my Lords, address you in the language of intimidation, when I entreat you to attend to the opinions of the people. But as noble Lords may dispute that those petitions express the opinions of the people, I will ask, can they dispute that those opinions were expressed in the results of the dissolution of last Parliament? When Sir Robert Peel introduced into the other House of Parliament the Bill for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, he stated that such changes had taken place in the opinions of the people, it would have been impossible for the Government to persevere in opposition to those opinions. Now, my Lords, how did the right hon. Gentleman make out his proofs that the people had so changed their opinions? He stated that the best criterion, the most practical and constitutional way to ascertain the opinions of the people, was to take a considerable number of the principal counties and towns, and to observe in what way the votes of their representatives had varied upon a particular question. On that principle the right hon. Gentleman compared the votes of the representatives of eighteen counties, which he thought the most important, and finding that of those representatives nineteen voted for, and only seventeen against the emancipation of the Catholics, when the question had been last before the House, he considered

that bare majority of two, a sufficient proof that the opinion of the people of England was favourable to that measure. The right hon. Gentleman's assertion of the change in public opinion was still more borne out by the votes upon the Relief Bill, which he introduced; for, of the representatives of those eighteen counties, twenty-seven voted for, and only nine against the bill. But how do we stand now? Every member for those eighteen counties has voted for this Bill. Instead of a majority of twenty-seven to nine, we have absolute unanimity. If that be not a proof of the public opinion, I know not what is. (Hear.) On examining the division upon the second reading of this bill in the other House, your Lordships will find that of eighty-two county members, seventy-six voted for, and but six against the bill; being a proportion of more than thirteen to one in favour of Reform. Again, my Lords, the representatives of towns, which are not inserted in either of the schedules A and B of this bill, are 154, and of these only forty-six voted against the bill. But in the schedules A and B things were entirely different. (Hear, hear.) Of the boroughs in schedule B, twenty-six members voted for, and seventy-six against the bill; and of those in schedule A, seventy-eight voted for, and twenty-two against it. Deducting, therefore, from the whole minority of English members against the second reading those who represented the boroughs in the two schedules A and B, who had a direct and personal interest in opposing the measure, there would remain but fifty-two against it. (Hear, hear, hear.) Nor does it stop there. For, besides those boroughs, there are many close corporations, such as Bath and Bristol, in which, although the population is numerous, the franchise is extremely limited. Now, the representatives of all those places had a direct interest in voting against the bill. Now, how does the question stand in respect to those boroughs? Of the forty-six members for boroughs, not in the schedules A and B, who voted against the bill, twenty-four were appointed by a very small number of corporators. Deducting those twenty-four, therefore, and adding to the remaining twenty-two, six county members, you will find that you have only twenty-eight persons having any pretence to be considered the representatives of the opinions of the people of England opposed to the bill. (Hear, hear.) With such a proof of public opinion being favourable to the measure, I shall only put it to your Lordships—is it expedient to reject it? (Hear.) Will you reject it in opposition to so strong and general an expression of public opinion, according, as I think, with the principles of the Constitution and with the best interests of the country? But, my Lords, we are told that we must not make concessions, because, if we once begin to concede, there will be no end to the demands. That is an old doctrine, which has led to much mischief in our own times. When was it that concessions over-

turned a government? Was it concession that lost the Netherlands to Philip? Was it concession that brought Charles I. to the scaffold? No, it was his unfaithful attempt to resume that which he had already conceded. Was it concession that compelled the second son of that unfortunate Monarch to abdicate the throne to which the people had restored his family? Was it not rather his obstinate disregard of their wishes, and his withholding of all concession? Was it by concession that we lost America? (Hear, hear.) Was it concession that overturned the old Monarchy of France? I know that it has been said so. But I am fully persuaded, that if the old nobility of France had done that which I now presume to counsel your Lordships to do (hear, hear); if they had consulted the wishes of the people, and had aided their King in granting to the people the concessions which the exigency of the times demanded, the family of that Monarch would never have been driven from the Throne of France. Was it concession that more recently drove Charles the Tenth from the same Throne? Was it not rather the fact, that if he had adhered to the Charter to which he was bound, the people would have been content with the rights which it gave them? I know, my Lords, that some persons make a different application of those facts of history, and say—"See, what are the effects of concession; when you offered to the Americans all that they required, they would not accept it." But their refusal is easily explained. The concession was not made in time. You persevered in resisting the reasonable demands of your fellow-subjects, until at length you drove those colonies into the arms of France. No man can lament more than I do the present unsettled state of Ireland; notwithstanding the concession to the Roman Catholics of those rights of which they had been deprived so long, and the withholding of which I have always considered as impolitic as it was unjust. For the concession they were indebted to the noble Duke opposite; and I repeat that no man can regret more than I do that the concession was not followed by peace and tranquillity, as had been expected. But what is the inference which ought to be drawn from that fact? It is not that the concession of just claims is bad policy. It is not that it is bad policy to be kind, indulgent, and just to your fellow-subjects; but that it is most impolitic to delay concession. (Hear, hear.) The true inference is that if Catholic Emancipation had been granted twenty or twenty-five years before, when all the wisest and most experienced statesmen of the kingdom recommended it, Ireland would be at this moment one of the most prosperous parts of the empire. By resisting the reasonable claims of the people you rendered their demands more violent. You taught them to know their own power, and when they did know it, perhaps they were not willing to lay it down when the occasion for exercising it had passed away;

and when at length you did yield to their claims, you accompanied the concession by a most impolitic measure, of which at the time I greatly disapproved, and by which the conciliating effects of your concession were greatly diminished. I say, therefore, my Lords, concede in time—concede graciously, and not grudgingly—make reform an act of justice, not an extorted capitulation. (Cheers.) Concede in time: look into the state of the representation, and see whether it is not justly liable to the objections urged against it: adopt this measure at once decisive and effectual—remove the cause of complaint, and place the fabric of the constitution upon a rock. Again I disclaim the use of any language of menace; but let us remember that the bill comes to us recommended from the King, and that it has been sent up to us by an overwhelming majority of all who can be called the real representatives of the people in the other House of Parliament: recollect that it has been urged forward by innumerable petitions, respectfully worded, and from which have disappeared all those topics which formerly gave offence. (Much cheering.) To all those claims for extravagant change, I know no man more opposed than I am; but I beg your Lordships to consider whether the recommendation of the Crown (cries of Order, from the Opposition benches.)—I refer to the recommendation in the King's Speech. (Cheers from the ministerial side.) I cannot imagine that I am not at liberty to allude to that, for every-body must be aware that the King did recommend reform to the consideration of Parliament. Is it to be believed, that, through the intervention of responsible Ministers, that advice did not come from the will of the King? (Cheers, and counter cheers.) But if the introduction of that point gives the slightest offence, I am willing to abandon it. (Cheers.) I ask, then, my Lords, with an overwhelming, an irresistible majority of the real representatives of the people—with that people roused and agitated from one end of the country to the other, and claiming by respectful but decisive petitions the restitution of their ancient rights, will you, the House of Lords, put yourself in opposition to the national opinion, by rejecting this bill, and thus disappoint expectations so reasonably and ardently entertained, and wishes so strongly and unanimously expressed? If this House do take an attitude of defiance to the voice of the whole country—a situation of things I would fain believe impossible—if it reject this bill even by a great majority of its Members, or with any thing approaching unanimity, still it would not long be able to oppose successfully the increasing tide of popular sentiment. The consequences may be dreadful to contemplate; if you cannot stem the tide, and yet resist it, is there no danger that you may be even swept away by its violence? (Much cheering.) But let me add, that the peril will be much greater, should this bill be thrown out by a comparatively small number of your Lordships. What, then,

may be your situation? I say again, do not flatter yourselves that by introducing a less efficient measure, you will allay the storm you will have raised, that you will recover the ground you will have lost, or overcome the alienation you will have produced. (Hear, hear.) I certainly deprecate any thing like a popular cry; as a citizen of a free state, who feels that liberty is essentially connected with order, I would resist the slightest approach to violence; as a Member of the Government, it is my duty to maintain tranquillity; but as a citizen, as a legislator, as a Member of the Government, as a man and as a statesman, I am bound to look at the consequences that may ensue from rejecting this bill; and although I do not state, as the noble Duke asserted of his measure, that the rejection of it would occasion a civil war—for I trust it will produce no such effect—yet I do say that such consequences are likely to result as make me tremble for the condition of my country, and for the security of this House. (Cheers from the Opposition benches.) I especially beg the spiritual portion of your Lordships to pause and to reflect. (Here Earl Grey turned and addressed himself to the Bench of Bishops.) The Prelates of the Empire have not a more firm or decided friend than I am. I acknowledge their purity, and I maintain the soundness of the discipline of the Church of England, and I know the general estimation in which those at the head of our religious establishment are held in the country; but let me entreat them to consider, if this bill should be unfortunately thrown out by any majority, or by a narrow majority, and that the question should be decided, and the scale turned by their votes, what will be their painful situation? (Cheers.) Let me remind them, that they have already shown that they can read the signs of the times, and that measures of concession have been brought forward in obedience to those signs, as all such measures should be introduced by the leading members of their body. They feel that the eyes of the nation are upon them, and they ought to feel it. (Hear, hear.) They feel, too, that it is necessary “to put their house in order,” in order to meet the growing expectations out of doors. (Much cheering.) They must remember that many important questions are now in agitation, to which a favourable or an unfavourable direction may be given, as their votes may either ensure success to, or may defeat a great political measure, upon which the national feeling has been so generally and unequivocally expressed. (Cheers.) I not press this point farther; but I will entreat the most serious attention to it. With respect to myself, and the Administration of which I form a part, the fate of this bill is a matter of comparative indifference. I have said, and I am not a man to recall what I have said, that by this measure I must stand or fall. (Continued cheers, especially from the Opposition side.) The question of my continuance in office, even for an hour, must depend

upon my seeing a reasonable prospect of being able to carry into effect this measure, to which I am pledged, as I think, by every tie of private honour, and by every obligation of public duty, both to my Sovereign and to the people. (Hear, hear, hear.) I wish your Lordships distinctly to understand (as I have already said, and the sentiment was received with some apparent eagerness), that it is my deliberate conviction, that the dangers to be incurred by the rejection of this bill cannot be obviated by any measure of less force and efficiency. If such a plan be proposed, it is not by me that it will be supported: I never will consent to hold out to the people a delusive measure of reform—I am convinced that they have a right to expect constitutional reform to the full extent of the bill upon the table, and their earnest wishes in its favour have been zealously expressed. I have set before your Lordships examples which should teach you how to avoid perils, which in my view must inevitably follow rejection. I advocate this bill as a measure of peace and conciliation; and in the words of the prayer we daily offer, I hope that Providence will “prosper all your consultations to the advancement of his glory—to the good of the church, and to the safety, honour, and welfare of the empire.” (Much cheering.) I am aware that I have already too long detained your Lordships, but I cannot conclude without expressing a hope—would I could say a sanguine expectation—that this measure may receive your sanction: I entreat your Lordships to take into view the situation of the country, and I trust that you will then see the necessity for confirming by your vote a measure calculated not only to produce immeasurable good, but to prevent incalculable evil. (General and reiterated cheers.)

It is now Wednesday morning, the 5th of October. The debate was adjourned on Monday night, and again last night, and it may not terminate before this *Register* goes to press. But there are some observations called for, upon the part of the debate, which is now before me. Upon the speech of Lord Grey it would be useless to waste time in praises: it is a speech, imperfect as the report must necessarily be, such as the oldest of us have never heard before; but then it is the speech of a man whom I have for more than twenty years past always held up to my readers as a man possessing greater talent and knowledge, with regard to the major part of public matters, than any other man in the kingdom. He has always been, in my opinion, ever since he first

appeared in Parliament, by far the best speaker that England has possessed during my time; and I say all this without forgetting that he would have utterly destroyed me if he could; and that it is no excuse for *such a man* to say that he was induced to make the attempt by the base importunities of others.

There was, however, something far beyond the ability displayed by Lord Grey; far beyond his clear and powerful statement, his unanswerable arguments, and his judicious appeal to the justice and prudence of the Peers; I mean, his bold, and honest declaration, *that he would not keep his place an hour if deprived of the means of carrying this great measure complete.* That is precisely what the country wanted, and also what it expected from him. Now, we all know how we stand. We all know that this bill will pass, or, that the powers of the state are to pass into other hands.

The opposition was begun by Lord WHARNCLIFE, better known to the country by the name of Stuart Wortley, who was one of the messengers to Queen Caroline, along with Banks, Wilberforce, and Ackland. He moved at once that the *bill be rejected*; but he afterwards wished to withdraw that motion; and after a great deal of talk about the matter; a great deal of ability shown by the Ministers, and a great deal of feebleness shown by the Opposition, he was allowed to new-model it into a motion, “*That the bill be read a second time this day six months.*”

The speech of Lord Wharncliffe was a speech of detail rather than of principle. It had no argument in it worthy of attention. Lord Mansfield, however, who came next on the same side, dwelt a good deal on the effects of the bill upon the character and proceedings of future Houses of Commons. He said that he believed, “*that men of talent and character, active and enterprising men, who held opinions contrary to the interests of the country, would get into Parliament;*” and that these men would reduce the taxes, wipe away the National Debt, and abolish the

tithes. He also alluded to an abolition of the pensions, sinecures, and grants; and his great objection to the bill seemed to be that it prepared the way for an *abolition of the peerage and an interference with the succession of the crown.*

Now, I will deal frankly with his Lordship. I am for a government of King, Lords and Commons; and, *if this bill pass*, it is my settled opinion that that government will still remain, and will be more respected and more honoured than it ever was before; but I am not for a government of King, Lords, and boroughmongers and loan-mongers, and with such government I never will rest contented. It is quite possible that I myself may be one of the men of "talent, activity, and enterprise" that this bill may let into the Parliament; and I can assure his Lordship that, if that should be the case, no exertion within my power shall be wanting to cause to be done the very things, the rendering of which things possible makes him object to the bill. In all the just prerogatives of the King, in the dignity and privileges of the peerage, I see the greatest utility, not only in maintaining the honour of the country, but in promoting the happiness of the people themselves. These high stations, beyond the reach of mere riches, serve effectually to check the everlasting rivalry in the masses of money; to be sure, I am to be understood as supposing that they are not to be purchased with money. They are, indeed, no harm to the people, and in certain cases they do them a great deal of good. They are attended with some evils; but, after long thinking and long observation, I am satisfied that, if judiciously used, the good of these institutions very far surpasses their evil. But if a peerage cannot be supported without pensions, sinecures, grants, half-pay, allowances, and salaries, such as we now behold, and such as we feel the effects of, then where is the man who will hold up his head in defence of a peerage? A peerage can be upheld without any of these: it has, for many centuries, been upheld without them:

only about half a century has elapsed since the peerage stood in need of such support: instead of upholding a peerage, they tend directly to destroy it, by showing the people that the peerage is thus made the cause of their burdens and their misery. When the people are told, as they were by the result of the motion of Sir James Graham, that a hundred and thirteen of the Aristocracy swallow up as much money, taken out of the taxes, as is equal in amount to the poor-rates of nine of the counties of England, how are the people to love that aristocracy? Not one sixpence of this money would be voted by a reformed Parliament; or, at least, that is my hope; and if it were not my expectation as well as my hope, I would not give a straw for that bill for which the nation now is so eagerly contending.

"They expect to have the taxes reduced." Expect! We are sure of it; aye, and to "see the national debt wiped off;" *justly*, mind; but, wiped off to a certainty; "and to see the tithes abolished." To be sure we do, and if we did not, I tell Lord Mansfield that I verily believe that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the people would wish the bill to be rejected, and never heard of more; for what is it to us that a thing called reform take place, if the same burdens upon us be to continue? The petition for reform which was presented by Lord Grey in the year 1793, contained this passage:—"Your petitioners must now beg leave to call the attention of your honourable House to the greatest evil produced by these defects in the representation of which they complain, namely, the extent of PRIVATE PARLIAMENTARY PATRONAGE; an abuse which obviously tends to exclude the great mass of the people from any substantial influence in the election of the House of Commons, and which, in its progress, threatens to usurp the sovereignty of the country, to the equal danger of the King, of the Lords, and of the Commons."

I am compelled here to throw my commentary aside, and let it wait for

another week, if indeed, events should not arise which may make it quite obsolete and of no use. This is **THURSDAY MORNING**. Last night the debate was renewed and continued from Tuesday night; but there was something which took place *before the debate began*, which was of infinitely greater importance than the debate itself; namely, a debate on the presenting, or rather on the subject of the **BIRMINGHAM PETITION**. I shall here insert this debate at full length. It shows that things are coming to that point which I always said they would come to; namely, to a general refusal to pay the direct taxes, if this bill did not pass. Last year I gave lectures in most of the principal towns of thirty out of the forty counties of England. In every one of those counties, with the exception of two, I was asked, in the most serious manner, by grave, sensible, and even rich men, *whether I would not recommend a refusal to pay the assessed taxes*; to which I always answered that I would give no recommendation on the subject. I was then asked, generally, to give my advice as to the mode of proceeding if the parties should resolve to do it. I always answered, that it was a thing about which I could offer no advice; and that, I thought it was better for us to petition with great perseverance for a reform of the Parliament, and to wait patiently for the effect of those petitions, lest, in our eagerness to obtain redress, we should cause the destruction of things which we wished to uphold.

Now, let it be observed, that this was not only many months before the Duke of Wellington threw the country into a ferment by his daringly expressed resolution against all reform; but the far greater part of these conversations took place *six months* before the last French Revolution took place; and yet the Duke now ascribes the universal cry for reform to the French Revolution. If it had not been for my advice, the refusal would actually have taken place, in one county, so early as the month of March. I shall now insert this debate, praying my readers to go through every part of

it with great attention, and particularly to notice the clever manner in which my Lord Holland blowed up the story of Lord Wharncliffe *about the inhabitants of Bond-street*. But the great thing to notice is the resolution at Birmingham to refuse to pay taxes, and Lord Eldon's appeal to the Lord Chief Justice upon the subject. I hope that all appeals of that sort will be rendered unnecessary by the speedy passing of the bill, which, after all, I think the Lords will pass, notwithstanding all the big talk we hear against it.

Lord WHARNCLIFFE had another petition to present from merchants, bankers, and other wealthy inhabitants of the city of London, the prayer of which he would have read at the table, in order that he might avoid falling into a similar mistake as he had fallen into in regard to the prayer of the other petition. But as to that petition, he might fairly have considered it as being against the whole bill, since it prayed for alterations, whereas ministers had declared against all alterations. (No, no.) He understood that such was the declaration of the noble Earl at the head of the Administration. But, however, as to the present petition, he was instructed to say that it had been signed between two o'clock on Saturday, and the same time on Tuesday, by 200 persons. It had been agreed to at a meeting of merchants and bankers, held in consequence of another petition, agreed to at another meeting, and said to be the petition of the merchants and bankers of the city of London, and which had been presented to this House as such. The petition which he had now to present was signed by many of the partners of the most respectable houses in London; and although the greater numbers might be on the other side, yet the men of the greatest property in London were adverse to the bill. Even among those who were friendly to the bill, the feeling in its favour was by no means so strong as it had originally been, and as a proof of this he need only state, that the petition formerly presented from the merchants, bankers, and traders of London had been signed by 9,600 individuals, whereas the petition last presented had been signed by only 4,700 persons. He was instructed to state that the signatures to this petition included a very great proportion of the property and intelligence of the City of London. But now he would take the opportunity to advert to what had been said with respect to some remarks of his the other night, to the effect that the feeling in London and Westminster in favour of this Reform Bill had very much abated. It was said that he had taken as his criterion the

inhabitants of Bond-street and St. James's-st. But he would assert with confidence, that if they were to apply not only to the inhabitants of Bond-street and St. James's street, but to inquire at the shops in all the streets in London, Southwark, Westminster, and Mary-bone, they would find that *the people had not only become cool towards the measure*, but that they generally blamed the ministers for proposing such a bill. When they were told that to pass this Bill was the only way to prevent a revolution, it might be more justly said their passing it under the present circumstances would occasion a revolution; and when he looked at the proceedings at the Meeting of the Birmingham Political Union, in order to vote their petition, he might say that the revolution was not only threatened, but actually begun. (Hear, hear.) These people were not contented with the accounts of their proceedings given in the newspapers, but they published them for themselves, with medals attached to them; and if the language used by the orators at such meetings was not that of intimidation, he did not know what was; for in case the Bill did not pass, they openly threatened to employ physical force to carry their measure. One person—he believed a person of the name of Haynes, had said that they were met to the number of 150,000, to petition the Lords to pass the Bill, and this was the style in which he addressed these 150,000 men:—"I agree that the power of the people is greatest, not when it strikes, but when it holds in awe; not when the blow is actually struck, but when it is suspended. As Manlius said to the Roman people, '*Ostendite bellum, pacem habebetis*;' so I say to you, show that you can fight, and you will never be under the necessity of fighting. (Loud cheers.) It is to the calm manner in which the people have exerted their power that their success has been derived. As Mr. Attwood had said, the Leviathan is hooked in the nose, and with 150,000 men at the foot of Newhall Hill to hold the rope, the Leviathan could not escape. (Loud cheers.) When the Reform Bill was carried into the House of Lords, they were surprised like Belshazzar at his unholy feast. They were not, like him, profaning the vessels of God's altar, but they were profaning that which, next unto his altar, the Almighty prizes the most—namely, the happiness and liberty of his people. (Loud cheers.) But now their dynasty is nodding to its fall—the hand-writing has appeared against them—they have been weighed and have been found wanting, and if they do not speedily give us that which is our own, it will be taken from them. (Loud cheers.) The power of the people is triumphant—they cannot stand against it; as well might the devils in hell rise in opposition to the decrees of Divine justice. (Loud cheers.) As you are aware, my countrymen, we are met to the number of 150,000, to petition the Lords to pass the

Bill. (Hear, hear.) The question has been frequently asked, 'Will the Lords pass the Bill?' I answer the question by proposing another—Dare they refuse it? (Loud cheers.) If they do refuse, upon what can they ground their refusal? Is it upon right? If it comes to a matter of right, they have no right to interfere at all in the case, for the reform we seek is the reform of the House of Commons, and the House of Commons is not their House but ours. (Hear.) Observe, that the greatest legal ornaments of the Law and Courts of our country have declared that the Peers have no such right. So Simon D. Ewes, and Coke upon Lyttleton, have decided, that in cases which concern exclusively either House, the other House has no right to interfere. (Hear, hear.) Upon this principle it is, that the House of Commons does not interfere with the election of the representative peers of Scotland. (Hear.) Can the Peers refuse the bill, because their trust is in the army? No. They cannot have an army to fight for them without they pay that army; and if the people refuse to pay taxes, how will that army be paid? (Loud cheers.) But supposing the English people were foolish enough to consent to pay taxes for the supply of such an army, where would it be found? (Hear.) Would the gallant men who have reaped immortal honours in foreign lands consent to tarnish those honours, by murdering their wives, their friends, and relatives? (Loud cries of No, no.) To support the tyranny of four hundred men over sixteen millions, would they imbrue their swords in the blood of their countrymen? There is not a town, nor village, nor even a hamlet, which had not contributed one or more brave men to fill up the ranks of our army; and will these men, at the call of the boroughmongers, come forth to shed the blood of their relatives upon their fathers' graves? The supposition is ridiculous." Here this man had dared the Lords to refuse to pass the bill. Was not this the language of intimidation? If it was not, he could not understand what was the language of intimidation. The whole tenor of the language applied to physical force; and he might therefore say, that revolution was not only threatened but begun. Mr. Attwood, who was at the head of this meeting, told them, "that the unholy domination of the Oligarchy was now coming to an end. He (Mr. Attwood) did not mean to say that they could live without labour, and hard labour too. But he meant to say, that every honest labourer in England had as good a right to a reasonable maintenance for his family in exchange for his labour as the King had to the crown upon his head; and this was the right which he was determined to enforce. If he had seen this right secured—if he had seen every honest man in England possessing an undoubted security for an honest bit of bread for his family—if he had seen every honest labourer possessing abundant wages

"for himself, and at the same time leaving reasonable profit to his employer, he would never have assisted in the formation of the Political Union." Was this the way in which to address a meeting of 150,000 people? Ought they to be told that they ought always to have abundant wages for their labour, and that the employer ought always to have a reasonable profit on his capital? It was impossible that the wages of labour should amount to more than its value in the market; and if wages were to be higher, it was impossible that the employer could have a reasonable profit on his capital. It was merely practising a delusion on the people to persuade them that the passing of this bill would bring them higher wages, or a larger profit on their capital. He hoped, however, that they would not be influenced in their proceedings by intimidation, or a dread of physical force. He repeated his belief, that the feeling *in and about London* in favour of this bill was not so strong as it was represented to be. But it was the object of the London press to magnify this feeling, and to say that it was very strong in London and its vicinity, in order to produce the stronger impression on the country. He had seen the Westminster meeting and some others in and about London, and he confessed that they appeared to him quite ridiculous; so much so, that the respectable persons who attended them appeared to be ashamed of them. Still, he believed that a vast majority were looking for a reform. (Hear.) He admitted it. He had said so before, and he repeated it, and in that object he was willing to go along with them as far as he safely could. But he maintained that there was among the people of London and its vicinity, a great shrinking from and great dread of this bill, and that now few comparatively would cordially support it.

The LORD CHANCELLOR:—As he had had the honour to present to their Lordships the other London petition, unanimously agreed to at a public meeting, and also the petition of the Birmingham Political Union, also unanimously agreed to at a meeting represented as consisting of from 100 to 150,000 persons, he hoped their Lordships would allow him to say a few words on the remarks of his noble Friend. But first as to the course which his noble Friend was pursuing. His noble Friend had been heard at great length against this bill—although not at greater length than his talents and weight entitled him to.—But he had had his speech against the bill, and he had been answered. But his noble Friend did not wait for another stage of the bill, or for another proper opportunity, to reply to that answer; but he took advantage of the presentation of a petition, in order to make another speech against the bill. His noble Friend had a perfect right to do so. (Hear, hear, from the Duke of Cumberland.) He admitted the right and sanctioned the principle, and he now laid in his claim to take advantage of it for himself. He was now

putting to the test the expediency and convenience of this course, and with that view he laid in his claim to take advantage of the principle. If, therefore, he should happen to speak on the bill this night, and any one answered in such a manner as to gall him, he, to be sure, would not reply to that answer; but then he would have a petition to present, and this would give him an opportunity of making another speech, without waiting for another stage of the bill. (Hear, hear, hear.) The objection was the inconvenience, but he admitted the right, and meant to take the benefit of it. (Hear, hear, hear.) Now, as to the observations of his noble Friend on the subject of the proceedings of the Birmingham Political Union meeting, which, when joined by other Political Unions in the neighbourhood, was said to consist of 150,000 men; it had often been represented as a very hard measure that a great and numerous assembly should be held to be responsible for such improper and unjustifiable expressions as might fall from one or two persons. It was not fitting that the great body should be answerable for the intemperate expressions of one individual, or of a few individuals, who might attend the meeting. He claimed the benefit of that maxim in favour of these petitioners, and protested against their being held responsible for intemperate expressions, which were not only improper, but contrary to law and common sense—not merely seditious, but perhaps amounting to little less than a capital felony. (Hear, hear, hear.) He protested against the injustice of supposing that those who found themselves in a situation where they could not avoid listening to these grossly improper expressions, were responsible for such expressions, when in all probability they highly disapproved of them. Let the meeting be judged of, not by the intemperate language of one or a few, but by its acts; and so far was its conduct from manifesting any thing like sedition or disloyalty, that more than 100,000 people took off their hats simultaneously, and solemnly prayed for a blessing on the head of their Sovereign. (Hear, hear.) That was not a vindication of the speaker who spoke so intemperately, but it was a proof that the assembly neither meant to begin nor to complete a revolution. (Hear, hear.) He did not mean to follow his noble Friend through his remarks as to the feelings of the people in London and its vicinity. His noble Friend had said that not merely the people of Bond-street and St. James-street were now adverse to this bill, but that even those of London, Southwark, and Marybone, as well as the people of Westminster, were shrinking with dread from the bill. But suppose that before his noble Friend was five minutes older a petition even from the inhabitants of Bond-street should be presented in favour of the bill (hear, and a laugh); and suppose that to-morrow a petition in its favour should be presented from the inhabitants of St. James-street (hear,

hear), and so on from all the streets which his noble Friend might choose to name in the course of his prognostications; this would be the best answer to his noble Friend's remarks, and there he would leave them.

EARL GREY: After what his noble and learned Friend had said, it was hardly necessary for him to make any observations on the remarks of the noble Lord opposite. He joined in the protest against attributing the idle and intemperate expressions of an individual to a whole body. But their Lordships would not be prevented by idle and intemperate expressions from doing their duty. When the bill in favour of the Roman Catholics was before their Lordships, they might well remember what intemperate expressions were used on one side and the other; but the noble Duke who was then at the head of the Administration, had disregarded these intemperate expressions, and passed that great and important measure. The noble Baron still persisted that the general feeling of the country was not in favour of the Reform Bill; but all that he would say in answer to that was to appeal to the petitions that were laid on their Lordships' table. (Hear, hear.) He was ready to admit that there were persons of respectability in London who might entertain sentiments unfavourable to reform; but he thought that it was rather too much to assume, that a petition from 800 persons formed a satisfactory ground for thinking that it spoke the sentiments of the great body of that opulent city. (Hear, hear.) With respect to the meeting at which the petition, presented by the noble Baron had been agreed to, it had been held pursuant to no public advertisement or notice; while, on the contrary, the meeting from which emanated the petition that he (Earl Grey) had presented the other night, was held, after having been advertised for a week, in the Egyptian Hall, and, being attended as numerous as any former meeting, the petition was agreed to unanimously. It was true that the petition in March had been signed more numerous, but that was owing to its lying a longer time for signature, and not to any falling off in the public opinion (hear, hear); and he believed that on investigation, it would be found that the people of England were now as much in favour of reform as they had been at any former period (cheers); and as a proof, he would remind their Lordships that there were persons who previously would not acknowledge the public desire—who had said that all the excitement was transient—but who had at length very much altered their tone (cheers), and had shown an inclination to accede to some sort of reform, having up to that time expressed themselves adverse to any reform whatever. (Cheers.) The noble Baron had said that he (Earl Grey) had refused to admit of any alteration in the bill. Now he really did think, that what he had stated on Monday night was sufficiently clear for all men to understand. It was the same that he had stated on the first mention of

the measure in that House. He had originally stated, that though he would submit to any alteration that was consistent with the principle of the bill, he would not agree to any that would detract from its real efficiency. That was the assertion which he had again made the other night; and he added, that if their Lordships should reject the bill, he would not be the person to propose any measure that should be less conclusive. (Loud cheers.) Those were the words which he had made use of; and, to show that he had been rightly understood, a noble Earl had, in the course of that very evening, very nearly quoted his (Lord Grey's) observations *verbatim*. This, then, was the fact as to what he had said; but did the House suppose that he was so ignorant of the privileges of that House, or so presumptuous as to his own power, as to say what should or what should not take place in the committee? That alone depended on their Lordships. (Cheers.) When the bill shall have reached the committee, the noble Lord may propose any alteration he pleases, and, indeed, he ought to vote for the second reading, after his declaration of the other night, in order that the bill might go into committee. (Hear, hear.) When they heard the noble Lord assent to the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs—to the giving representatives to populous and opulent places—to adding to the number of the county members—the noble Lord had, in fact, assented to the whole principle of the bill (loud cheers), and all the rest was only a question of degree, which it was for the committee to decide. Let the bill then go into committee, and let the noble Lord, when it was there, propose his alterations; and he (Earl Grey) would tell the noble Lord what should be his (Earl Grey's) conduct in that case. If the noble Lord proposed alterations which he thought calculated to diminish the effect of the bill, and, instead of making it a benefit, only turn it into a delusion for the people, he (Earl Grey) would most strenuously oppose them; but, at the same time, he should be perfectly prepared to discuss them, and to leave them to the decision of the committee. These were the grounds on which he intended to act, and which he had stated over and over again; and after this explanation, he trusted that there would be no further misunderstanding of his intention. (Hear, hear.) He was pledged to this measure, or one as efficient, and he would not be a party to anything that should diminish it; but he had not stated that alterations might not be made that should not diminish its efficiency, or that he was not prepared, in the committee, to consider any alterations that might be proposed. (Hear, hear.)

THE EARL OF HADDINGTON said, that the Lord Chancellor had read a lecture to his noble Friend for making a speech in answer to the debate on the Reform Bill, but he (Lord Haddington) thought that the noble Earl who had just sat down had been doing

exactly the same thing. (Hear, hear.) With respect to the question brought before the House by his noble Friend (Lord Wharncliffe) he thought that the House had a right to complain that threats had been held out, and that they were not to be allowed to judge of the bill on its own merits. (Hear, hear.) He believed, that although there was a general feeling in favour of reform, there were also great apprehensions as to the result, should the bill pass into a law. (Hear, hear.)

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM begged to recall their Lordships to the question of the Birmingham petition. He agreed with the noble and learned Lord that the sins of the few were not to be visited on the many; and it was a matter of congratulation to him to hear that noble and learned Lord state, that what had been read by the noble Baron was only the language of a single individual; and he would never believe, till he actually saw it, that any body of Englishmen could be seduced by a demagogue to set themselves in opposition to the institutions of the country. But he, nevertheless, begged the noble Earl to take warning by what had taken place at Birmingham, and to recollect that this language had not been held out at a common meeting, but at a political union, which the noble Earl had himself acknowledged, (Cheers,) and with which he had himself corresponded. With respect to the words which had fallen from the noble Earl on Monday night, he (the Duke) had taken a note of them, and they were—"Your Lordships must take this bill"—upon which there were cheers on this side of the House, after which the noble Earl went on—"Your Lordships must take this bill, or some other measure more dangerous, which you may not be able to resist." (Cheers from the Ministerial side.)

Lord PLUNKETT did not see there was any thing in the words that had just been quoted by the noble Duke calculated to call for reprehension. What his noble Friend had stated was a matter of opinion; and, as far as that opinion went, he must say that he entirely agreed with his noble Friend (Cheers); and he believed that any one acquainted with the consequences of rejecting a measure safe, just, and reasonable, must feel that there would be a demand on the part of the people for something that would be unsafe, unjust, and unreasonable. (Hear, hear.) With respect to what had taken place at Birmingham, he agreed that the words that had been quoted by the noble Baron were only chargeable on one individual.

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM: On two or three.

Lord PLUNKETT: Well, suppose it were so. Upon this the noble Lord—because one, two, or even three had acted improperly—not only arraigned those, but told the House that there was not only a revolution in progress, but one actually completed in the country. (Cheers and laughter.) This certainly was as mag-

nificent a deduction from slender premises as he had ever heard. (Laughter and cheers.)

Lord TENTERDEN agreed with the noble and learned Lord as to the danger of rejecting a just and reasonable measure; but the matter for them to consider was, whether this bill was just and reasonable (cheers); and in order that they might come to that consideration, he should move the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate.

Earl GREY rose to order. There was a question concerning a petition already before the House, and there were other petitions to be presented.

Lord TENTERDEN had not been aware of that.

The Earl of WICKLOW would not have addressed their Lordships if there had only been the words read by the noble Baron to be complained of at the Birmingham meeting. But he would ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, whether his correspondent had informed him *that one of the speakers, after having adverted to Hampden having refused to pay the ship-money, had stated that in like manner he would refuse to pay the taxes; and had then called upon those who would refuse with him to hold up their hands, upon which the hands of one hundred and fifty thousand persons were held up; after which he called on those who would not refuse, to hold up their hands, and there was not one exhibited.* (Hear, hear, hear.) He should like to know whether, after that fact, the noble and learned Lord would still maintain the peaceable, orderly, and kindly disposition of the meeting at Birmingham. (Hear, hear.)

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, that nothing could have been more natural than his noble and learned Friend's (Lord Tenterden's) mistake, in supposing that they had been debating for a couple of hours without a question before them; for it was a thing that they were in the habit of doing continually. (Hear, hear.) But it so happened, most extraordinarily, that there was a question before them at that instant, and he should avail himself of it to answer the query that had been put to him by the noble Earl who had just sat down. His correspondent, he begged to say, had not mentioned the fact which had just been stated by the noble Earl; nor had he (the Lord Chancellor) heard of it till that moment. He certainly did not like the fact, but what he had to say about it he would reserve for the debate on the bill. Undoubtedly it was *a disagreeable piece of intelligence* (a laugh); but, nevertheless, as a lawyer, he must say, that all those hands might have been held up, and yet he could not say that there was any breach of the King's peace, or any offence that the law knew how to punish. He could not help it. Such was the law. With respect to the "kindly" disposition of the meeting, that was a new word introduced by the noble Earl. What his correspondent had stated, was, that the meeting was conducted as regularly as one of their Lordships' meetings (a laugh),

and that it had separated as quietly as children coming out of school. (A laugh.)

The Earl of ELDON should be ashamed of himself, if, *after living so long in his profession*, he did not take that opportunity of saying a few words. No man could be more ready than he was to admit that a meeting was not answerable for the declarations of an individual; but if by *holding up their hands*, or in any other way, the meeting had *endangered the peace of the country*, he knew no reason for believing that they had not already fallen into the situation of being answerable to the laws of the country. (Hear, hear.) If those statements which had been read to the House had really been made, he would take the liberty of saying, that if those statements had come under the cognizance of the law officers of the crown, and if no satisfactory explanation of them had been given, *those authorities had not done their duty to the country in failing to bring them under legal notice*. (Cheers.) But this being the case, he was necessarily disposed to believe that there was some way of accounting for men having presumed to make such statements. As a lawyer, he begged to apply himself to the *Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench*, and to the noble and learned Lord who, for so many years, had presided over the *Court of Common Pleas* (Lord Wynford); and he desired to know from these noble and learned Lords whether, if those hands had been held up in the manner that had been described—and the fact could be proved—*every individual in the meeting was not in point of law as much answerable as the man who had proposed to them to hold up their hands*. (Hear, hear.) And he begged to tell the noble and learned Lord (Brougham), towards whom he should ever entertain the greatest respect, that that seat on the Woolsack would not be a seat which any one could maintain for six months, if the doctrines which were now circulated throughout the country—which were every morning placed under the review of every one—were suffered to be promulgated any longer. (Hear, hear.) That was his opinion; he alone was answerable for his opinions, and for that he was prepared to answer at all hazards.

The LORD CHANCELLOR rose, not so much for the purpose of replying to the observations just made, as for the purpose of preventing his noble and learned Friend under the gallery from answering the question put to him. If the matter in question were an indictable offence, his noble and learned Friend might be called upon to try it, and therefore he would at present feel the impropriety of delivering any opinion respecting the law as applicable to the acts done. It was quite a mistake to suppose that he (the Lord Chancellor) had given the slightest countenance to the Birmingham meeting: he merely said that no breach of the peace had been committed. An indictment might be preferred for an offence of another nature; upon that he gave no opinion: he went no further than to say

that no breach of the peace had been committed. The Chairman said it was a peaceable meeting, meaning that there was no riot.

LORD TENTERDEN was not ungrateful to his noble and learned Friend upon the Woolsack for the admonition received from him, but he could assure the House, that even without that admonition he should have refrained from pronouncing any opinion, for the matter might come before him judicially; and if his noble and learned Friend had not so addressed to the House the necessary explanation, he himself should have felt bound to explain.

LORD WHARNCLIFFE and the Earl of DUDLEY rose at the same time, but the latter gave way. The former said, he did not mean to impute the words of the speech to any one but the person by whom it was spoken, or to fix responsibility for it upon any other person; but he desired to call the attention of Government to this, that if they allowed such proceedings to go on much further every thing like legitimate authority in the country must cease.

LORD HOLLAND:—I do not rise for the purpose of calling any one to order, but I would beg to request the attention of the House, in order that I may be allowed to state the condition in which matters now stand. The question before the House is, that a certain petition do lie upon the table, and upon this a conversation takes place. Now I have no intention of making observations upon the Birmingham meeting, or upon Political Unions, any further than to observe, that what we have heard to-night is nothing more than a repetition of what the noble and learned Lord opposite has often said before upon similar occasions. For example, when the Association in Ireland was under discussion, and also in the case of various other associations in other places, he over and over again told us, that the country could not last if such things were allowed to continue. I confess it has always appeared to me, that discussions of this nature will neither redound to the honour or dignity of this House, or in the least degree assist our deliberations. However, upon that subject I will not trouble your Lordships with any observations, neither shall I say much upon any other topic; but I cannot refrain from just noticing what fell from a noble Baron as to the feeling of the city of London, and which I cannot for a moment allow to pass without registering my dissent. But as to what fell from a noble Baron on the Cross Bench, I will assert, that nothing more unjust, more unwarrantable, or more uncalled for, was ever uttered. The words of the noble Duke were quoted, and what do these words amount to?—If you reject this bill you will soon have another bill for reform, though not from the same hands or from the same government—that would be a bill in truth more unpalatable to some of your Lordships, though, probably, more in accordance with the votes of this House. I can think in such circumstances of a noble Lord or noble Duke who had previously declared, that no-

thing could induce him to form part of any government which sanctioned a measure of reform. I can now fancy such a noble Duke coming down to this House and saying:—"Things are now most materially changed—there is a collision between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. I know what war is and you do not. I told you I had no intention of bringing forward a measure of reform, but now the state of things is most materially changed; but don't allow large Meetings such as Birmingham to intimidate you—be bold, be stout, be determined. But if the association be once formed, you must give way, then there is danger of war, and agitators are abroad; and I know what war is, and I tell you you are in a different situation from that in which you before stood, and I will drag you through the mire after having before bespattered you." It is just possible that a noble Duke might hold such language. Is it not just possible that a right hon. Gentleman in another place might say something of the same sort? He might say "My opinions are not altered—I am really opposed to the bill, but there is danger, and it is only to danger that I would yield; and, therefore, I recommend you to make concessions to the dangerous spirit of the times." Surely, my Lords, you cannot fail to ask yourselves this—Is it not much more dignified to yield before there is danger than afterwards? As respects this House, the present is now a virgin question. If you agree to reform now, it becomes the spontaneous act of this House. I inquire of your Lordships, is not such a course more consistent with the dignity of this House, and likely to prove more advantageous to ourselves? There is no shrinking from this truth—either that you must take the bill now, or be forced by circumstances to adopt hereafter a measure full as efficient, and, perhaps, less acceptable to this House; whereas, if the proposed change be adopted before the danger arises, all idea of intimidation will be out of the question. (Cheers.)

The Duke of WELLINGTON.—The noble Baron rose, and made a speech to order; and I never recollect a speech more inconsistent with order, or with the practice of this House. On the question, "That the petition do lie upon the Table," the noble Baron referred to a debate, going on, I may say, upon a subject now under the consideration of Parliament; and he also referred to a debate on a subject respecting which I rather thought that, for once in my life, I possessed the approbation of the noble Baron. This discussion has now lasted some time; but during the whole of it I remained silent. I did not wish to draw your attention to the bill now on your Lordships' table, upon an occasion merely of presenting a petition. I have not said one word, I have not uttered a cheer during the present debate, and I do not see how my sentiments can with propriety be brought into discussion.

I do not deny that I always felt strongly the attempts that were made to intimidate your Lordships; but for that Meeting which has been described in the paper produced in this House, and for all such Meetings I feel the greatest contempt; and I am perfectly satisfied that the House is superior to any intimidation founded on the proceedings of any such assemblages. I feel no concern for all these threats, whether proceeding from Birmingham or elsewhere. I have always thought, and I think still, that the law is too strong to be overborne by such proceedings. I know further, that there does exist throughout this country a strong feeling of attachment to the Government of the country, as by law established. I know that the people look up to the law as their best means of protection, and those laws they will not violate in any manner to endanger the Government of the country, or any of its established institutions. I am afraid of none of these, but I will tell your Lordships what I am afraid of. I am afraid of revolution, and revolutionary measures, brought in and proposed by his Majesty's Government. (Long-continued and enthusiastic cheering from the Opposition benches.) I assert, and I believe that history will bear me out in the assertion, that there has been no revolution in this country, or any great change, which has not been brought about by the Parliament, and generally by the Government introducing measures and carrying them through by the influence of the Crown. I would therefore entreat your Lordships to do all you can to defeat this measure—use every means of resistance which the just exercise of your privileges will warrant, and trust to the good sense of the country to submit to the legal and just decision you come to. (Cheers.)

The Earl of CARLISLE said, that none of the revolutions which occurred in this country were brought about by Parliament. He wished to inquire from the noble Duke who had just sat down, if he meant to say that the reformation of the Church of this country was a parliamentary revolution, or if the revolution of 1688 was a parliamentary revolution, and were there any other revolutions besides those?

The Earl of WINCHILSEA could not suffer the unwarrantable attack which had been made upon a noble Duke near him to pass without notice. He could not allow without notice, that any noble Lord should say of that noble Duke that he would aim at obtaining office by a sacrifice of principle. (Cries of "No, no!" from the Treasury bench.) A more unjustifiable attack than that which had been made upon the noble Duke he had never heard. Though he (Lord Winchilsea) differed from that noble Person upon a great and memorable occasion, yet he gave him the fullest credit for perfect sincerity, and for an earnest wish to maintain the peace of the country. It was with much regret that he had now to acknowledge that he assisted in

removing that noble Duke from office, and putting in place of him and his colleagues a Ministry deserving neither the confidence of Parliament, nor the respect of the country—a Ministry ready to sacrifice the dearest rights and interests of the country, and incur the hazard of overturning all the established institutions, from too great a facility in yielding to clamour and popular excitement, rather than listening to the dictates of good sense and sound policy. The noble and learned Lord upon the Woolsack had laid down a doctrine to which he (Lord W.) could not subscribe, namely—that to refuse those taxes which the necessities of the country and the honour of the Sovereign demanded, was no breach of the public peace—he would say it was treason; and if the Government did their duty, they would instantly prosecute the persons accused of such an offence.

Lord HOLLAND rose to explain: he did not cast any imputation upon the sincerity of the noble Duke—neither did he raise any question as to his motives for accepting or rejecting office. The noble Lord then recapitulated the speech given above.

Earl GREY. I wish to vindicate myself from the imputation of having made, upon the presentation of a petition, a second speech upon the bill now upon your Lordships' table. I am sure it will be felt that I did not say more than the occasion called for. There is another topic upon which I think it necessary to say a few words. I think the noble Earl opposite will, upon reflection, be induced to think, that in the heat of debate he has gone further than he meant. I am not one of those who object to observations upon public men. I admit that he, believing we deserved to forfeit the confidence of Parliament, is fully entitled to say so. If he had not gone further, and said that I belonged to a body which had forfeited its claim to public respect, I should have had no right to complain; but I do think that parliamentary usage affords no justification for his saying that we are ready to sacrifice the dearest interests of the country to retain our situations. That, I am sure he will upon reflection, see is against all parliamentary order. What I would desire to ask the noble Earl is this—Does he mean to say, that for the purpose of retaining our situations we are prepared to sacrifice the rights and interests of our country?

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM and the Earl of Winchilsea rose at the same moment, and for a considerable time the calls for each appeared pretty equal, but the noble Duke eventually succeeded in obtaining a hearing. He was sure that the noble Earl merely meant that Ministers were ready to sacrifice what he (Earl W.) considered—not what they themselves considered to be, the rights of Englishmen.

The Earl of WINCHILSEA: I never meant to impute to the noble Earl opposite the sacrifice of any principle which he ever professed. Individually I feel the highest respect for the

noble Earl. So great was my respect for him, that I did feel the strongest inclination to support his Government, for I felt quite sure that he would be the last man in the country who would retract a word he had uttered, or swerve from any principle he professed, and the noble Duke near me has correctly interpreted my sentiments. I did mean to impute to the noble Earl merely the intention to destroy what I conceive to be the dearest rights of the country.

Earl GREY expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

There was then a very general call for the Order of the Day; but

Lord HOLLAND said, there were still several petitions to present.

The Earl of DUDLEY was understood to agree to the continued reception of petitions.

Lord ROLLE rose to ask a question, but could not obtain a hearing.

Lord HOLLAND said, he had a petition to present from the inhabitants of Bond-street; it was signed by 101 persons; there are little more than 200 householders in the street, and a large proportion of them were females, so that the inhabitants of Bond-street had now relieved themselves from the reproach to which they were liable amongst their fellow-citizens of being unfriendly to Reform.

Lord WHARNCLIFFE said his mention of Bond-street and St. James's street was purely accidental. He merely referred to them as they presented themselves first to his mind—not from supposing that they were particularly adverse to Reform.

Lord HOLLAND. If the noble Baron will only mention the particular street in which he supposes an opinion to prevail unfriendly to the bill, I am ready to pledge myself that I shall bring down to the House to-morrow a petition from the majority of the inhabitants of such street, setting the noble Lord right as to the state of their opinions. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.)

Lord MULGRAVE rose amidst loud cries of "Order!" which for some moments prevented his being heard. He would stand there, he said, until it should be their Lordships' pleasure to hear him. (Order, and hear.) He assured his noble Friend, that in the remarks which he (Lord Mulgrave) had made upon the opinions of the inhabitants of Bond-street, he did not mean to disparage them in comparison with their fellow-citizens. All that he meant was, that if his noble Friend would take the trouble to extend his inquiries and perambulations to other streets, he would find the same specific contradiction of his statement, that the feelings of the people had cooled upon the subject of reform, as was afforded by the example which he himself (Lord Wharnccliffe) had chosen. (Hear, hear, hear.)

Lord WHARNCLIFFE had never said that the feelings of the people were altered on the general question of reform, but that a great part of them shrunk from the bill upon the table.

Lord MULGRAVE had not read the petition just presented by his noble Friend beside him (Lord Holland); but he believed that the petitioners earnestly prayed their Lordships to pass the bill now before them. (Hear, hear.)

Lord Kenyon and the Marquess of Westminster rose together, amidst loud cries for the latter, to whom at length Lord Kenyon gave way.

Lord WESTMINSTER said, that the motion before the House was that the petition (from Bond-street) should lie upon the table; and as he had presented a petition from the city of Westminster, of which the present petitioners are inhabitants, he begged leave to say a few words upon that petition. (Hear.) The noble Baron opposite (Lord Wharncliffe) had said that the petition of the inhabitants of Westminster was far from being respectably signed—that it was a meagre petition, and, in short, a failure altogether. (No, no! from Lord Wharncliffe.)

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM rose to order. (Great interruption by cries of "Hear!" and "Order!") He said, that the petition had been ordered to lie upon the table, and that, therefore, there was no question before the House.

The Marquis of WESTMINSTER said, that the question respecting the petition had not been put, and that he was, accordingly, in order. (Hear, hear.) He had only to say, that if the inhabitants of Bond-street or St James-street, or any other street in Westminster, were opposed to the Reform Bill, they would have attended the meeting, and opposed the petition which he had presented. It was not to be believed, that if the majority of the inhabitants of that city were of different opinion from those of the petitioners, they would not have attended at the meeting, and overwhelmed the reformers by their votes.

Thus, then, we stand, On Thursday morning the sixth of October, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one; and now, I think, we come to the test of my memorable prophecy, contained in my leave-taking address when I fled to America to escape the dungeons of SIDMOUTH. After stating that that reform, for which a million and a half of us had actually petitioned the Parliament; after stating that that reform alone could save the country from revolution, and stating how that reform would soon deliver us from the accursed funding and paper system, the effects of which I then proceeded to describe, I proceeded thus:—"The borough-

mongers are frightened at the work of their own hands; they have surrounded themselves with all the securities which an army and the absolute power of imprisonment at pleasure can give them; but be you assured that they tremble within. They are scared at the desolation which they have brought upon the country. They are compelled to smile upon the fundholders; and yet they would fain that there were no such people in existence! Baffled in all their projects and prospects, they know not which way to turn themselves. Their progress seems to be like that of the Gamester in Hogarth, and their situation at this particular stage is nearly approaching to that of his, when, having ventured and lost his last desperate stake, you see him gnashing his teeth, holding up above his head his two clenched fists, stamping upon the floor, and muttering curses, while the fundholders, who sit round the table, are sneering and scoffing at his demoniac agitations.

"Some time ago it was their project to cause the Bank to pay again in specie; and, agreeably to that project, they issued the new silver currency. It appears to be now their project to get fresh quantities of paper again afloat; and, if they can do that, the first effect of it will be, the disappearance of the new silver currency, which, though inferior in sterling value, will never long continue to circulate amidst such additional quantities of paper as will produce any sensible effect in the raising of prices and in the lowering the real amount of taxation. I do not clearly see the possibility of augmenting the quantity of paper in circulation, seeing that the proprietors of lands and of goods have nothing to offer in pledge for it. But, besides, if it were to be effected, what tremendous mischief it would produce! Suppose the paper thus put out to reduce the value of the currency one-third. A man who has made a contract to-day to receive three hundred pounds at a distant day, would in fact receive only two-thirds of what he

“ had contracted for. This real breach
 “ of contract would take place with
 “ respect to all bargains made at this
 “ time, or recently made; all mortgages,
 “ lands, leases, annuities, yearly wages
 “ of servants, and every thing else of
 “ that description. Goods sold on long
 “ credit would share the same fate; and
 “ as there is perhaps many millions-
 “ worth of goods always sent to foreign
 “ countries upon long credit; when the
 “ money comes to be paid, it would be
 “ paid in a currency of one-third less in
 “ value than the currency *calculated*
 “ *upon when the goods were sold.* Thus
 “ a merchant abroad, who must now
 “ send three hundred pounds sterling
 “ to discharge his debt to his creditor
 “ here, would, in fact, have to send only
 “ two hundred pounds sterling in real
 “ money; because, two hundred pounds
 “ in real money would purchase three
 “ hundred pounds in the paper that
 “ would then be afloat.”

“ Here, then, the waves of the sys-
 “ tem, by suddenly taking a swell in
 “ this new direction, would overwhelm a
 “ new class of the community; and by
 “ this time, the discredit of the paper
 “ would become so notorious to the
 “ world, that the people of all foreign
 “ nations would keep aloof from it;
 “ would begin to shake their heads, and
 “ exclaim, ‘ *Babylon the Great is fallen.*’
 “ What I am disposed to think, however,
 “ is, that this project for getting out
 “ new quantities of paper-money will
 “ not succeed; and yet, without it, the
 “ interest of the debt cannot be paid out
 “ of the taxes; for though standing
 “ armies and sedition bills and Habeas
 “ Corpus suspension bills are dread-
 “ fully powerful things, their power is
 “ not of that kind which enables people
 “ to pay taxes. In all human proba-
 “ bility, then, the whole of the interest
 “ of the debt and all the sinecures and
 “ pensions and salaries, and also the
 “ expenses of a thundering standing
 “ army, will continue to be made up,
 “ by taxes, by loans from the Bank,
 “ by Exchequer Bills, by every species
 “ of contrivance to the latest possible
 “ moment, and until the whole of the
 “ paper system, amidst the war of

“ opinions, of projects, of interests, and
 “ of passions, shall go to pieces like a
 “ ship upon the rocks.”

This was my prophecy then; and it
 now depends, in all human probability,
 upon the conduct of the Lords and of
 the Ministry and the King, whether the
 last part of the prophecy or the first part
 of it shall be literally fulfilled. The
 Lords do not know that the country is
 absolutely convulsed with its distresses.
 They imagine that the club-houses are
 a specimen of the state of the country.
 My belief is, that a great deal more
 than one-half of the farmers and trades-
 men are totally careless about all mat-
 ters relative to the preservation of prop-
 erty. I believe that such is their
 state, that they hardly hope to be able
 to recover themselves by the operation
 of the ordinary and peaceable course of
 things, even if all the taxes were re-
 pealed. So that their Lordships are
 quite deceived if they think that even
 men of property will be frightened at
 the sound of revolution. BARING was
 reported to have said, at the opening of
 the Parliament in October last, or soon
 afterwards, that the people were as well
 off as they ever were, and that all the
 disturbances and all the projects of
 change were produced by the then re-
 cent French Revolution; so says the
 Duke of WELLINGTON still. I have re-
 lated above, that, in a great proportion
 of the English counties, men of prop-
 erty, men of sense, proposed, long be-
 fore that French Revolution, to resort
 to a refusal of the payment of taxes;
 and that they only were prevailed upon
 to wait in order to try the Parliament
 once more for a reform. The Duke of
 WELLINGTON was driven out of office
 solely because he expressed his deter-
 mination to grant no reform whatsoever.
 In other respects, he was rather popular
 than otherwise; but that declaration
 ruined him. It is notorious that Lord
 GREY came in in order to quiet the peo-
 ple by promising them a Parliamentary
 reform; is it, then, to be supposed that
 those who opposed this reform, having
 a great majority in the House of Com-
 mons elected under the old system
 even; is it to be supposed that they

could now come into power and govern the country in peace? Lord GREY has distinctly declared that he will not remain in power a single day longer than he has a fair prospect of speedily carrying this measure; this is a most important declaration. The country understand the full value of it; and, then, who is to succeed him? Who is to carry on the Government in opposition to him? Why, when he came into power, it was as nearly anarchy as possible: the Prime Minister could neither walk nor ride in the streets without insult: there were fights in the streets, the people against the police, one attacking and the other defending him. It was impossible for that to go on without a dreadful convulsion; without something or other that must have speedily brought order and law to an end. What, then, should we have to expect now! To describe the state of things that would arise if Lord GREY were to be driven out, and WELLINGTON put in his place, is a task that I shall not undertake, and that for more reasons than one; but one is quite sufficient; and that is, that I have not the power to describe it.

The debate which I have just inserted, relative to the Birmingham petition, was, to be sure, most triumphant for the ministers. They showed their superiority over their opponents in every possible way. Without expressing approbation of the strong language made use of at Birmingham, they suffered it to have its full weight with the country; they suffered the unanimous declaration of 150,000 people, against the payment of taxes to have its full weight; and they were certainly right in so doing; they were right in letting the example of Birmingham operate on the people, and on the minds of their opponents. The ridicule of Lord HOLLAND upon WELLINGTON and PEEL, exceeded anything of the kind that I have seen for a great many years; and the sting seems to have been felt in a manner proportioned to its sharpness. It was a complete and most admirable answer to all that the Duke had said the night before in his defence. But, of all the things

that have occurred during the whole of these six months of debating, nothing equals the nice little exposure which Lord HOLLAND brought snugly in his pocket for the Seigneur of WHARNCLIFFE, who had told them, on Monday night, that he had talked with the sensible tradesmen of Bond-street, and that they had told him that they saw great danger in the Reform Bill. There are, it seems, two hundred houses in Bond-street, many of them in the occupation of women; and my Lord HOLLAND had, in his pocket, a petition from a *hundred and one men*, shop-keepers in Bond-street, praying the Lords not only to pass the bill, but to do it quickly. The same Seigneur of WHARNCLIFFE brought petitions from some persons at Ipswich, containing, as he said, a prayer against Reform. My Lord RADNOR took a peep into the petition, and found that the petitioners prayed most earnestly for a *moderate and suitable Reform*, and he had found this to be the case in several other instances of anti-reform petitions. Out of the 15,000 of whom Lord ELDON had presented the petition against the Reform Bill, it was discovered, that *ten thousand* had been put down *by mistake!* The Seigneur of WHARNCLIFFE, finding himself abandoned by Bond-street, said that he did not confine himself to Bond-street, but that his observations extended to London, Southwark, and all round about, upon which Lord HOLLAND desired him to be so good as to name some one street somewhere, and he pledged himself to bring from that very street, a petition of nine-tenths of the inhabitants, praying for Reform.

In short, all the infamous lies, representing the people to have cooled upon the subject of Reform, now stand exposed to open day; are now proved to have been lies hatched for the purpose of mischief: the Lords must see that they have the whole of the people against them if they throw out this Bill. They must see that all their objections are futile: they must see, at any rate, that the people pay no attention to those objections: they must see that the question now is, whether they shall

declare open hostility to the people, or whether they shall shake hands with them, and live together upon friendly terms in future. All the professions (put forth by every opposition Lord) that they opposed the Bill, *not for their own sakes only*, but for the sake of the people also; these professions are, alas! of no avail. The people now know how much their families are benefitted by the rotten-borough system: the people know, that what my Lord KING said was true; namely, that "*the proprietors of seats in Parliament were also now the proprietors of the taxes*;" and that this proprietorship worked "in such a way as to give Members of the House of Lords more than three hundred thousand pounds a year out of those taxes." The people know all this; they have long known it; and, knowing all this, how useless, alas! are the professions, that, in refusing the Bill, which will take away the proprietorship, the Lords consult the interests of the people, and not the interests of themselves alone!

If the Lords who oppose this bill were to read the speeches at the Birmingham meeting for purposes of information, and not for purposes of cavil and of quarrel, never would they have put forth professions such as I have been pointing out: never would they have hoped to cause such professions to have any weight with the people. The speakers at that meeting have developed the whole history and mystery of the opposition to reform on the part of the Peers; and their Lordships should bear in mind that the knowledge discovered by the speakers at that meeting is possessed by them in common with almost the whole of the people of this kingdom. Let them then read those speeches for information: all the people do not make speeches; but all of them think; and they all think alike upon this subject. It is, in fact, simply a contest between the payers and the receivers of taxes. The payers are satisfied that they never can know prosperity and happiness again unless they have cheap government. If, indeed, the Seigneur of WHARNCLIFFE had gone to the Club

Houses; to the "*United Service Club*," and the "*Junior United Service Club*;" if he had gone to the offices of Stamps, Customs, Excise, Navy, Army, Victualling; if he had gone to the cloth and meat and corn contractors; if he had gone to the contractors for loans, transports, and the like; if, in the counties, he had gone to the tithe-owners; if he had gone to the Universities; there he would have found petitioners enough for no reform whatsoever; they being quite willing to leave "*well enough alone*." If he had taken those who profit by our populous pension list, and sinecure list, and list of grants, and of retired allowances and of widows' pensions, and children's pensions; what a goodly petition he would have had to present; and, if one had time, one might imagine the sort of petition that they would have drawn up and put into his hands, setting forth, "that your humble petitioners are well aware that bribery, corruption, perjury, drunkenness, and all sorts of evils, arise from a system of rotten boroughs and rotten corporations choosing Members to serve in Parliament; but that your humble petitioners know also that there is seldom any good, without its concomitant evil; seldom any virtue, possessed in a high degree, without some concomitant vice; that Providence has so ordered it that good and evil shall co-exist in this world; and that, all that mortals have to hope for in this vale of tears, is, that the good shall preponderate over the evil: that we find the good so to preponderate in this case; that we find that, notwithstanding the bribery, corruption, perjury and infamy belonging to elections, the Parliament *works well*;" and that, therefore, we beseech your right hon. House not to suffer any change whatever to be made in the representation in Parliament."

There is not a tax-eater in the whole kingdom that would not sign such a petition as that. And, talk about the thing as long as we please, it is, after all, a question of money: it is, after all, a question whether those who labour and who have an income out of

their own property, shall or shall not, continue to be made poor and miserable; to be constantly exposed to all sorts of anxieties and hardships; many of them frequently to want a meal, and occasionally some of them to be starved to death; whether or not all these should continue to be inflicted upon them in order that those who have no property of their own, or who do not work in any way whatsoever, should be able to live in ease and in luxury. That is the real question, after all; and that question, as far as this present House of Lords can go, must now be decided in a very few days. The system *works well* for those who receive the taxes and the tithes; but these are the thousands, while the payers of the taxes are the millions; and the question, therefore, is, whether the Lords will or will not prefer the good of the thousands to the good of the millions.

LORD MANSFIELD is reported to have said that a reformed Parliament would, amongst other things that it would do, "wipe away the national Debt, regardless of the *gratitude* due to those who *assisted* the Government in the time "of its need." This is just the language that old Lord CHATHAM said the muck-worms made use of. But, LORD MANSFIELD is not treated fairly here by me, until I have finished his sentence, thus: "and to do away with PENSIONS which had been won by the blood and glorious exertions of those who had procured for us a safe and honourable peace." What, then, my LORD MANSFIELD, I suppose that BURKE and THOMAS GRENVILLE and Lord GRENVILLE and MONTAGU BURGOYNE and Lord CAMDEN and the late Marquis of BUCKINGHAM and the two EGREMONTs and Lord ARDEN and CHARLES YORKE and SIDMOUTH's son; I suppose that all these, and hundreds of others, have shed their *blood* for us. And CANNING's mother and sister, and the Duke of WELLINGTON's mother, and all the long list of noble ladies and honourable ladies, and their little boys and girls, and HERRIES's mother and sisters, and Sir JOHN CAM HOBBHOUSE's wife, and CUMBERLAND, the play-writer, and his

children; all these have shed their blood, I suppose, and we, poor ignorant mortals! never knew any-thing at all about the matter. Poh! my LORD MANSFIELD, say not a word more about the matter! We will take care that we will have no ladies to shed their blood for us in future, nor little girls nor boys; and I tell you plainly, that every exertion in my power shall be made to cease giving one single farthing more of the public money to those which we already have upon the list. It is a question of money, again I say. Dividing it into parts, this question will arise: Shall the parsons keep the sixteen hundred thousand pounds which the Parliament voted them out of the taxes after PERCEVAL came into power? Another question will be this: Shall this nation continue to be taxed, in order to send one hundred thousand pounds a year out of the country, as half-pay to Hanoverian and other foreign officers, and as allowances to widows and children of such of them as may be dead? If the Seigneur of WHARNCLIFFE had gone to Hanover, what an unanimous petition he could have got against Parliamentary Reform! In short, we are a nation of most industrious people, pressed down to the earth by want, in consequence of our incomes and our earnings being taken from us to be given to those who scorn us while they wallow in luxury upon the fruits of our labour. We all understand it. There is not a labourer in any hamlet in the kingdom who does not, in substance, understand the matter as well as I do. We all know that the sixteen hundred thousand pounds given to the parsons came out of the loans of which we have to pay the interest. We all know that the war against the French had for its principal object to prevent Parliamentary reform in England. We all know that the loans made to carry on that war were greatly injurious to us. We all know this, that the Government of this country may be carried on; that the King and his family may be generously maintained in all the splendour of Royalty; that a navy ready to cope with all the world may be always in a

state of preparation ; and that all this may be done with taxes amounting to less than *ten millions a year* ; without any tax of Excise, without any assessed tax, without any stamp tax, and with only as much tax and customs as would be advantageous, instead of being injurious, to the industry and resources of the kingdom, and with only such a tax upon the land as would form a security for the state in case of emergency. We all know this now ; we all know that Providence has done so much for us that it requires nothing but common talent and integrity in the Ministers and the King, and a vigilant and honest Parliament, to make us always the most powerful country in the world, and to give the whole of us that ease and abundance and peace and security which our industry so richly merits. We all know this well ; and I, for one, will never cease my best exertions to obtain that which we ought to possess. Therefore the Lords might save themselves the plague and trouble of any further debating upon the subject. If they mean to refuse to pass the bill, the sooner we have their refusal the better. I hope and trust that their decision will be the contrary of this ; and I am sure, that if such be their decision, they will very soon perceive that their alarms, if they really entertain any, have been groundless ; and that, this day twelvemonth, the alarmists will be very much obliged to any one who will say nothing to them about the matter. The consequences to them shortly stated are : they will lose rotten boroughs, pensions, sinecures, grants, and allowances to themselves and their families ; and they will, in future, have their own estates in reality, and not be elbowed out of them by butcher and other contractors, and by loanmongers. These are the consequences to the Peers of England ; and their taste must be very different from mine if these be not consequences which will delight them instead of plunging them into that despair of which some of them now so ludicrously talk.

WM. COBBETT.

ADDRESS

TO THE

EARL OF RADNOR

FROM THE

BRIGHTON POLITICAL UNION.

MY LORD,

WE, the Members of the Brighton Branch Political Union, have learnt with great pleasure, the generous and patriotic sentiments expressed by your Lordship in a letter to Mr. Whittle at Manchester, recommending Mr. Cobbett to the people of Manchester as a person capacitated in an extraordinary degree for the representation of them in Parliament, and the support of all their rights and privileges as men, and equal members of society ; also, your offering pecuniary assistance, which will be necessary to the accomplishment of an end so ardently anticipated by the people.

Though Englishmen have yielded in almost a tacit submissiveness to unabating tyranny, arising from the barbarous caprice or the unhallowed interest of their imperious enemies ; nay, though Englishmen have flattered the very authors of all their ills and miseries ; yet they have ever felt gratitude and the highest esteem for the individual that would boldly enter the political arena to arrest the iron hand of oppression, and as the champion of the people, to defend their ostensible rights.

As such is Mr. Cobbett justly and pre-eminently regarded by tens of thousands of his fellow creatures.

Unequaled in political talent, he has for a long period of years directed the voluminous productions of his pen in the protection and defence of the enslaved millions of his native country ; the powerful influence of his astonishing mind has been a moral lever exerted with singular perseverance upon the solid fulcrum of truth against the ignorance that has more or less pervaded all ranks of society upon subjects of a political nature ; yes, he above every other person, has contributed to remove from the nation at large, the

gross film that has obscured and does even now but too much obscure their visual faculties.

By his instrumentality, the people of this kingdom have been roused from a moral lethargy, and the rising generation feel surprised that their forefathers knew so little.

Deeply impressed with these feelings, conscious of the invaluable mental advantages we have reaped from his writings, and of the consequent debt of gratitude due by us to him, we feel the utmost pleasure in seeing him supported, and of course must respect your Lordship, who has, with so much disinterestedness and manliness, declared your sentiments at this most momentous crisis, regardless of those who do not appreciate our worth.

To your Lordship then, who entertains so high an opinion of Mr. Cobbett; whose breast is warmed by a patriotic sympathy for the condition of an outraged people; and who has publicly recommended and offered to support so talented and persevering a man as a Member for Manchester, after the passing of the Reform Bill; we feel it our duty to testify the esteem we entertain for your Lordship, and to show that we are capable of appreciating the exertions of every zealous advocate for freedom.

Unused to this method of expressing our sentiments, we trust your Lordship will overlook the irregularity of the style and the barrenness of the expression; regarding this as a token of honest respect, and the humble effusion of sincerity, untainted by the deceit of empty adulation.

In conclusion, we hope that your Lordship will persevere in the cause of freedom, and beg to remain,

Your Lordship's, most respectfully,

For and on behalf of the Union,

(Signed) JOHN FURSE, Chairman.

ELIAS TAYLOR, Secretary.

I think it just and proper to *publish* the above; but though I know these worthy men to be sincere in what they say, I beg to be understood as fearing that I do not merit all the praises that

they bestow on me. A letter that I received from Mr. Elias Taylor, on the same subject, it is not necessary now to insert.

WM. COBBETT.

TRIAL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL will receive, with my compliments, the third edition of *his* and *my* Trial, which took place in Guildhall, on the seventh of July last; and if the BARINGS had not so much money and I so little, I would send them one too. The *Examiner*, the *Ballot*, and some other weekly newspapers in London, not excepting the *Handkerchief news*, have done their duty with regard to this Trial, and with regard to me; and, what is more, with regard to the case of Mr. and Mrs. DEACLE and the conduct of the magistrates in Hampshire. As for me and my affairs, they are dust in the balance compared with the proceedings and consequences of the Special Commission in Hampshire, which, as Mr. HARVEY so well said, have awakened thoughts in the people which must lead to interesting consequences. Mr. MILDMAY, who presented the petition in favour of the BARINGS from Winchester, will soon see *another petition* which will bring him nearer home; and I myself promise him, that he shall have ample opportunity of conning that petition over before-hand.

From the LONDON GAZETTE,

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1831.

INSOLVENTS.

D'OLIVEIRA, J. A. G., and F. G. d'Oliveira, Old Jewry, merchants.
 LOMAS, J. T., and F. Cooke, Dover-street, Piccadilly, tailors.
 WRIGHT, A. J. C., and W. H. Buckmaster, New London-street, Crutched-friars, wine-merchants.

BANKRUPTS.

BROWN, H., Liverpool, silk-mercier.
 DEAN, W., Abbey Mills, Durham, worsted-spinner.
 ELDER, J., Oxford-street, horse-dealer.

HALL, W., T. S. Hall, & W. J. Hall, Crosby-square, and Lower Thames-street, packers.
 LUDDINGTON, W., Stoke Newington-road, Hornsey, and Adam's-court, Broad-street, coal-merchant.

MENDELSON, H., Manchester, jeweller.

MERCER, R., C. Ely, and B. Treacher, Swansea, coal-owners.

SMITH, W., and M. Lewis, Tunstall, Staffordshire, earthenware-manufacturers.

WATKINSON, T., Marsh-gate, Lambeth, and Earl-street, Seven-dials, publican.

WHITE, G., North Wharf-road, Paddington, victualler.

SCOTCH SEQUESTRATIONS.

CALDER, T. and J., Edinburgh, hat-manuf.

TELFER, W., Leith, merchant.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1831.

GREEN, A., Brewer street, Pimlico, tailor.

JONES, T., late of Llangollen, Denbighshire, inn-keeper.

BANKRUPTS.

DAWS, J., W. Daws, and M. Daws, Lenton, Nottinghamshire, bleachers.

HALL, S., Duke-st., West Smithfield, brazier.

HORNER, B., Bilton with Harrowgate, Yorkshire, joiner.

MORRIS, P., and S. Smith, Friday-street, warehousemen.

TEBBUTT, S., Islington, wine-merchant.

WILLIAMS, J., Liverpool, joiner.

LONDON MARKETS.

MARK-LANE, CORN-EXCHANGE, OCTOBER 3.—Our supplies since this day se'nnight, of English wheat, barley, malt, beans, and flour, as also of foreign rye and linseed, have been great; of English peas, and Scotch and Irish flour, moderately good: of foreign flour, English, Irish, and Scotch oats, as well as seeds, from all quarters, with the above exception, limited. No foreign barley has arrived since Saturday se'nnight.

This day's market was rather numerously attended by buyers; but as these, for the most part, offered lower prices than the sellers seemed willing to accept, the trade was throughout very dull. With wheat and beans at a depression of from 1s. to 4s.; oats, white peas, and barley, 1s. to 3s., and rye 2s. per quarter. Flour was expected to fall 5s. per sack before the close of the market. There were a few parcels of new brank and Indian corn offering—the former at from 26s. to 31s.—the latter 32s. to 36s. per quarter; but neither seemed to have found purchasers.

Wheat	47s. to 58s.
Rye	32s. to 36s.
Barley	24s. to 30s.
fine	32s. to 42s.
Peas, White	34s. to 36s.
Boilers	33s. to 40s.
Grey	34s. to 40s.

Beans, Old	35s. to 38s.
Tick	37s. to 40s.
Oats, Potatoe	25s. to 28s.
Poland	23s. to 28s.
Feed	19s. to 23s.
Flour, per sack	60s. to 65s.

PROVISIONS.

Bacon, Middles, new, 40s. to 48s. per cwt.	
Sides, new ...	42s. to 50s.
Pork, India, new..	130s. 0d. to —s. 0d.
Pork, Mess, new...	60s. 0d. to 65s. per barl.
Butter, Belfast	86s. to 88s. per cwt.
Carlow	86s. to 90s.
Cork	86s. to —s.
Limerick ..	87s. to —s.
Waterford..	84s. to 86s.
Dublin	—s. to —s.
Cheese, Cheshire....	64s. to 80s.
Gloucester, Double..	64s. to 70s.
Gloucester, Single..	56s. to 63s.
Edam	46s. to 48s.
Gouda	44s. to 46s.
Hams, Irish.....	50s. to 60s.

SMITHFIELD—October 3.

This day's supply of beasts was tolerably good, but not so great as was that of this day's se'nnight: of sheep, fat calves, and porkers, rather limited.

The trade was, in the whole, rather brisk.—With mutton at an advance, veal at a depression of 2d. per stone: with beef and pork at Friday's quotations.—There were but few lambs in the market, and as these have become young sheep, lamb might be considered to have gone out of season. The stock was of fair average time of year quality. Beasts, 2,682; sheep and lambs, 20,010; calves, 138; pigs, 160.

MARK-LANE.—Friday, Oct. 7.

The arrivals this week are moderate; but the market is very dull at Monday's prices.

THE FUNDS.

3 per Cent. } Fri. Sat. Mon. Tues. Wed. Th ur	
Cons. Ann. }	81½ 81 81½ 81½ 80½ 80½

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Containing, besides all the usual matter of such a book, a clear and concise

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